



CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE

WITH

ECKERMANN AND SORET.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

By JOHN OXENFORD.

REVISED EDITION.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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ANY introduction referring to the subject of this work must be superfluous. It records the conversations of a German philosopher, of one of the greatest literary geniuses of the nineteenth century, during the last ten years of his life. Goethe was born in August, 1749, and died in March, 1832. His age is seventy-three when the *Conversations* commence, and seventy-two when they terminate.

However, the form in which this translation is presented to the English public requires a short explanation.

In 1836, John Peter Eckermann, who was a friend of Goethe, gave himself in the "Introduction," published in the first volume of *"Conversations with Goethe."* In 1840, a second volume of the same work appeared, containing additional *Conversations*, and also a *Supplement*, compiled from his own notes, and from those of Eckermann, and Goethe's, M. Soret, of whom there is a *Portrait* in the *Supplement*. "Preface to the Third or Supplemental Volume," and the *Conversations* works are dedicated to Her Imperial Highness, the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar and Eisenach.

Had I followed the order of German editions, I should have placed the whole of the *Supplement* at the end of the contents of the first two; however, the *Conversations* in the third volume are not of a later date than those in the first two, and terminate with the death of Goethe, and it was therefore deemed it more conducive to the reader's convenience to arrange in chronological order the whole of the *Conversations*, as if the *Supplement* had not been published. It is thus that the

Still, to preserve a distinction between the *Conversations* of the First Book and those of the *Supplement*, I have marked the latter with the abbreviation "*Supplemental Conversations*," (i. e., *Sup.*.) when a *Conversation* has been furnished by Eckermann, but by Soret.

I feel bound to state that, while translating the First Book, I have had before me the translation by Mrs. Fuller, published in America. The great merit of this version I willingly acknowledge, though the frequent omissions render it almost an abridgement. The contents of the Supplementary Volume are now, I believe, published for the first time in the English language.

J. O.

[1850.]

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES.

THIS collection of Conversations with Goethe took its rise chiefly from an impulse, natural to my mind, to appropriate to myself by writing any part of my experience which strikes me as valuable or remarkable.

Moreover, I felt constantly the need of instruction, not only when I first met with that extraordinary man, but also after I had lived with him for years; and I loved to seize on the import of his words, and to note it down, that I might possess them for the rest of my life.

When I think how rich and full were the communications by which he made me so happy for a period of nine years, and now observe how small a part I have retained in writing, I seem to myself like a child who, endeavouring to catch the refreshing spring shower with open hands, finds that the greater part of it runs through his fingers.

But, as the saying is that books have their destiny, and as this applies no less to the origin of a book than to its subsequent appearance in the broad wide world, so we may use it with regard to the origin of this present book. Whole months often passed away, while the stars were unpropitious, and ill health, business, or various toils needful to daily existence, prevented me from writing a single line; but then again kindly stars arose, and health, leisure, and the desire to write, combined to help me a good step forwards. And then, where persons are long domesticated together, where will there not be intervals of in-

difference ; and where is he who knows always how to prize the present at its due rate ?

I mention these things to excuse the frequent and important gaps which the reader will find, if he is inclined to read the book in chronological order. To such gaps belong much that is good, but is now lost, especially many favourable words spoken by Goethe of his widely scattered friends, as well as of the works of various living German authors, while other remarks of a similar kind have been noted down. But, as I said before, books have their destinies even at the time of their origin.

For the rest, I consider that which I have succeeded in making my own in these two volumes, and which I have some title to regard as the ornament of my own existence, with deep-felt gratitude as the gift of Providence, and I have a certain confidence that the world with which I share it will also feel gratitude towards me.

I think that these conversations not only contain many valuable explanations and instructions on science, art, and practical life, but that these sketches of Goethe, taken directly from life, will be especially serviceable in completing the portrait which each reader may have formed of Goethe from his manifold works.

Still, I am far from imagining that the whole internal Goethe is here adequately portrayed. We may, with propriety, compare this extraordinary mind and man to a many-sided diamond, which in each direction shines with a different hue. And as, under different circumstances and with different persons, he became another being, so I, too, can only say, in a very modest sense, this is *my* Goethe.

And this applies not merely to his manner of presenting himself to me, but to my capacity for apprehending and re-producing him. In such cases a reflection * takes place, as in a mirror ; and it is very seldom that, in passing through another individuality, nothing of the original is lost, and nothing foreign is blended. The representations of the person of Goethe by Rauch, Dawe, Stieler, and David have all a high degree of truth, and yet each bears more or less the stamp of the individuality which produced it. If this can be said of bodily things, how much more does it apply to the fleeting, intangible objects of the mind ! However it may be in my case, I trust that all those who, from mental power or personal acquaintance with Goethe, are fitted to judge, will not misinterpret my exertions to attain the greatest possible fidelity.

* In the German "Spiegelung," but "refraction" furnishes a more adequate image.—*Trans.*

handling, nevertheless, in the handling of my subject, I have still been guided by the same love to the import of the work.

That which we call the *Tragedy* is in fact but a means to a single object, is by no means an end in itself, and is, in fact, rather is it, even if a nation, a people, a city, a time, something comprehensive, which I feel to be the true object of a deep and widely-reaching work, and which I have expressed. It cannot be done in a single, or in a few, or in a sentence upon sentence, or in a sentence upon sentence, and, through all these, one attraction must be kept, and that is the goal itself. So, to give a conclusion to the whole, I have let remarks on poetry often have a more general character, and indeed often of manifest contrast to the more specific, and all the stress on the matter, which the world has been so long upon the internal nature of the poetry, and the more important point is the subject; sometimes the subject is the subject, sometimes all is made to depend on the subject, and the time upon the spirit, with a new character of the subject.

But all these contradictions are only the result of the fact, and, taken together, denote the essence of the work, and lead to an approximation to it. I have, therefore, been guided in these and similar cases, not so much by the subject, as by the course of disliking years and hours. I have, therefore, and comprehensive spirit of the elevated reader, who will not be led astray by any isolated part, but will be guided by the whole, and properly arranged and combined with the whole.

Perhaps, too, the reader will find much here, which at first sight seems unimportant. But if, on looking deeper, he perceives that such trifles often lead to something important, or serve as a foundation to something which comes afterwards, or even tribute some slight touch to a delineation of character, there may be, if not sanctified, at least evened, even a better result.

And now I bid a loving far well to my so long cherished book on its entrance into the world, wishing it the fortune of being agreeable, and of exciting and propagating much that is good.

WEIMAR, 31st October, 1835.

PREFACE TO
THIRD OR SUPPLEMENTAL VOLUME.

Now, I have no intention of making any kind of political party of my Government, but with General I have the pleasant sensation of having overcome a difficult task.

[illegible][illegible]

Thus did my mother, in the first of her days of widowhood, manage the domain of the household, and the children, as fresh, as if I had been a child, and not a man. Her young Goethe was never far from her, and I, too, was always near the sound of his voice, to attend to his studies, and to his play again in the evening, and to his walks, and to his poetry, rushing, and cheering, and cheering, and cheering, and cheering, well lighted room. And so, in the first of her days of widowhood, he was with me in the evening, and in the morning, and in the cloth cap, with his hair grey, and his eyes, and his eyes, and his eyes, with his countenance, as fresh and healthy as the first

Frankfurt, and in the latter place he was in a very close connection with him. He was a constant guest at the family table, and a frequent and welcome visitor at the evening saloon; moreover, his attentions in regard to the various points of contact on which he had a better knowledge than myself. At a profound minute in the autumn of 1824, when he was in his knowledge of German, he had a manuscript of Goethe's "Metamorphosis of the Plants" sent to Frankfurt, and thus gave a wider circulation to that important work. His position at court likewise brought him frequently into Goethe's presence, as he sometimes accompanied the prince to Goethe's house, while sometimes came to Goethe in His Royal Highness the Archduke, and Her Imperial Highness the Archduchess, gave him occasion for visits.

These personal interviews were often recorded by Mr. Sart in his journals; and some years ago he gave me a list of them, and gave me a small manuscript of the same, in the form of a list, in order that I might, if I pleased, use them in my work, and that they might be introduced in my work in the most logical order.

These notes, which were written in French, were not entirely complete, but sometimes very rich and observed, and in many cases the author found time to make them in his leisure and often in his greatly occupied days. Since, however, the manuscript was in his manuscript which was not repeatedly and thoroughly discussed by Goethe and myself, my own notes were carefully adapted to complete the notes of Sart, to give them a definite form, and to develop sufficiently what he often had only indicated. All the conversations which are based on Sart's notes, and for which that manuscript has been much used, are marked with an asterisk (*) placed against the date, to distinguish them from those which are by me alone, and which, with a few exceptions, make up the years from 1824 to 1829 (inclusive), and a great part of 1830, 1831, and 1832.

I have now nothing further to add, but the wish that this third volume, which I have so long and so tenderly kept for me, will meet with that kind reception which was so abundantly accorded to the first two.

WEIMAR, 21st December, 1847.

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS REAR, AND OF HIS PARENTS,
AND OF THE ORDER OF THE CONNECTION.

T WILKEN on the lake, a little town between Lüneburg and
amburg, on the border of the marshy North Sea, Lüne-
orn, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was
it, as we may well call a small town, and had a population
able of being heated, and no other, and it was
ounted at once to the hayfield, which, at the end of
e house door.

As the young at born of a small town, I, like many
g, did not know my parents, or the order of the con-
ge; and, to a certain extent, I knew the order of the
ns of my father's first marriage were not known. One of them
ter several voyages as a sailor, had been the captain of a
rein party, and had not since been heard of, and it was
for being several times ordered to be shot, and he had
Greenland, had returned to Hamburg, and had been

oderate circumstances. The order of the connection
arriage had been the same, and the order of the con-
velfth year they had all been the same, and the order of the
service in our town was the same.

The principal income of the town was the same, and the
hich not only supplied the town with the same, but also
ve us every year a small town, and the order of the con-
nough to sell for a small town. We had a small town, and
nd, which supplied us with the same, and the order of the con-
ear. Corn for bread, and the order of the connection was
ver, obliged to buy.

My mother was the same, and the order of the connection
ve much satisfaction. The order of the connection was the same,
e village, and in both cases the order of the connection was the same.

My father's business was the same, and the order of the con-
ording to the new order, and the order of the connection was the same,
one, and to travel on a small town, and the order of the connection

he was seen with a light wooden box on his back, going in the heath-country from village to village, hawking ribbons, thread, and silk. At the same time he purchased here woollen stockings and *Beyderwand** (a cloth woven out of the wool of the sheep on the heaths, and linen yarn), which he again disposed of in the *Wendische* on the other side the Elbe, where he likewise went hawking. In the winter he carried on a trade in rough quills and unbleached linen, which he bought up in the villages of the low and marsh country, and took to Hamburg when a ship offered. But in all cases his gains must have been very small, as we always lived in some degree of poverty.

If now I am to speak of *my* employments in childhood, these varied according to the season. When spring commenced, and the waters of the Elbe had receded after their customary overflow, I went daily to collect the sedges which had been thrown up in the dykes and other places, and to heap them up as litter for our corn. But when the first green was springing over the broad meadows, I, with other boys, passed long days in watching the cows. In summer I was actively employed on our field, and brought dry wood from the thickets scarce a mile (German) off, to serve for firing throughout the year. In harvest time I spent weeks in the field as a gleaner, and when the autumn winds shook the trees I gathered acorns, which I sold by the ton to persons of opulence, to feed their geese. When I was old enough, I went with my father on his travels from hamlet to hamlet, and helped to carry his bundle. This time affords some of the fairest remembrances of my youth.

Under such influences, and busied in such employments, during which, at certain periods, I attended a school, and barely learned to read and write, I reached my fourteenth year; and every one will confess, that from this situation to an intimate connection with Goethe there was a great step, and one that seemed scarcely probable. I knew not that there were in the world such things as Poetry or the Fine Arts; and, fortunately, there was not within me even so much as a blind longing and striving after them.

It has been said that animals are instructed by their very organization: and so may it be said of man, that, by something which he does quite accidentally, he is often taught the higher lessons which slumber within him. Something of the sort happened to me, which, though insignificant in itself, gave a new turn to my life, and is therefore stamped indelibly on my memory.

* *Apfel, Linsey-woolsey.*—*Trans.*

I sat one evening with both my parents at table by the light of a lamp. My father had just returned from Hamburg, and was talking about his business there. As he loved smoking, he had brought back with him a packet of tobacco, which lay before him on the table, and had for the crest a horse. This horse seemed to me a very good picture, and, as I had by me pen, ink, and a piece of paper, I was seized with an irresistible inclination to copy it. My father continued talking about Hamburg, and I, being quite unobserved, became wholly engaged in drawing the horse. When finished, it seemed to me a perfect likeness of the original, and I experienced a delight before unknown. I showed my parents what I had done, and they could not avoid praising me and expressing admiration. I passed the night in happy excitement, and almost sleepless; I thought constantly of the horse I had drawn, and longed impatiently for morning, that I might have it again before my eyes, and delight myself with beholding it.

From this time the once-excited propensity for visible imitation was never forgotten. And as I found no other help of any sort in our place, I deemed myself most happy when our neighbour, who was a potter, lent me some outlines, which served him as models for painting his plates and dishes.

These outlines I copied very carefully with pen and ink, and thus arose two books of drawings, which soon passed from hand to hand, and at last came under the eye of the upper Bailiff (Oberamtmann), Meyer, the first man of the place. He sent for me, made me a present, and praised me in the kindest manner. He asked me if I should like to become a painter, for if so, he would, when I was confirmed, send me to a proper master at Hamburg. I said that I should like it very much, and would talk of it with my parents. They, however, who belonged to the peasant class, and lived in a place where scarce any occupations were followed except tilling and grazing, thought of a painter only as one who paints doors and houses. They, therefore, advised me earnestly against it, saying it was not only a very dirty, but a very dangerous trade, at which one might break one's legs or neck, as was indeed often the case, especially in Hamburg, where the houses are seven stories high. As my own ideas of a painter were not more elevated, I abandoned my fancy for this trade, and put quite out of my head the offer of the good Bailiff.

However, the attention of higher persons having been once bestowed on me, I was kept in sight, and efforts were made to aid me in various ways. I was permitted to take private lessons with the few children of that rank; I learned French, and a little Latin and music: I was also provided with better clothing, and the

worthy superintendent, Parisius, did not disdain to give me a seat at his own table.

Henceforth, I loved school very much. I sought to make this pleasant state of things last as long as possible, and my parents readily consented that I should not be confirmed before my sixteenth year.

But now arose the question, what was to be done with me? Could I have followed my wishes, I should have been sent to pursue learned studies at a gymnasium; but this was out of the question, as I was not only destitute of means, but felt myself imperiously called upon by my circumstances to get into some situation as soon as possible, where I could not only take care of myself, but in some measure help my poor old parents.

Such a situation presented itself immediately after my confirmation, for a judicial functionary (Justizbeamter) of the place offered to take me to do copying and other little services for him, and I joyfully consented. I had, during the last year and a half of my schooling, acquired not only a good hand, but practised a great deal in composition, so that I might consider myself very well qualified for such a post. I also carried on some of the minor parts of an advocate's business, frequently drawing up both judgment and petition, according to prescribed forms: this lasted two years, viz. till 1810, when the Hanoverian office, at Winsen on the Luhe, was broken up, and the place being taken into the department of Lower Elbe, was incorporated with the French empire.

I then received an appointment in the office of direct taxes at Lüneburg, and when this was also broken up in the following year, I entered the office of the under prefect in Uelzen. Here I worked till near the end of the year 1812, when the prefect, Herr von Düring, patronized me, and made me secretary of the mayoralty at Bevensen. This post I held till the spring of 1813, when the approach of the Cossacks gave us hopes of being freed from the French yoke.

I now took my leave and returned home, with no other intention than that of joining the ranks of those patriotic warriors who began secretly to form themselves in various places.

This plan I carried out. Towards the end of the summer I joined as a volunteer, with rifle and holster, the Kielmannsegge Jäger corps, and in Captain Knop's company made the campaign of the winter of 1813-14, through Mecklenburg, Holstein, and before Hamburg, against Marshal Davoust. Afterwards we crossed the Rhine against General Maison, and in the summer marched about a great deal in the fertile provinces of Flanders and Brabant.

Here, at the sight of the great pictures of the Netherlands,

new world opened to me ; I passed whole days in churches and museums. These were, in fact, the first pictures I ever saw in my life. I understood now what was meant by being a painter. I saw the honoured happy progress of the scholars, and I could have wept that I was not permitted to pursue a similar path. However, I took my resolution at once. I made the acquaintance of a young artist at Tournay ; I obtained black crayons and a sheet of drawing-paper of the largest size, and sat down at once before a picture to copy it. My enthusiasm somewhat supplied my deficiencies in practice and instruction, and thus I succeeded in the outlines of the figures. I had also begun to shade the whole from the left side, when marching orders broke up my happy employment. I hastened to indicate the gradations of light and shade in the still unfinished parts with single letters, hoping that thus I might yet complete my work in some tranquil hour. I then rolled up my picture, and put it in a case, which I carried at my back with my gun, all the long march from Tournay to Hameln.

Here, in the autumn of 1814, the Jäger corps was disbanded. I went home ; my father was dead ; my mother was still alive, and resided with my elder sister, who had married, and had taken possession of the paternal house. I began now to continue my drawing. I completed first the picture I had brought from Brabant ; and then, as I had no proper models, I stuck to some little engravings of Ramberg's, of which I made enlarged copies in black chalk. But here I felt the want of proper knowledge and preparation. I had no idea of the anatomy either of men or animals ; I knew as little how to treat properly the various kinds of trees and grounds ; and it cost me unspeakable toil to make anything look decently well by my own mode of proceeding.

Thus I soon saw that, if I wished to become an artist, I must set to work in a way somewhat different, and that more of this groping about in my own way would only be lost labour. Now my plan was to find a suitable master, and begin from the very beginning.

The master whom I had in my eye was no other than Ramberg, of Hanover, and it seemed to me the more possible to stop in that city, as a beloved friend of my earlier days lived there in easy circumstances. On his friendship I could rely for my support, and he was constantly inviting me.

Without further delay, therefore, I tied up my bundle, and took, in the midst of the winter of 1815, a walk of almost forty leagues, quite alone, over the heath and through the deep snow. I arrived at Hanover in a few days, without accident.

I went immediately to Ramberg, and told him my wishes.

After looking at what I laid before him, he seemed not to value my talent, yet he remarked that I must have bread first; that the mastery of the technical part of art demanded much labour, and that the prospect of earning a subsistence by art lay at a great distance. Meanwhile, he showed himself willing to give me as much as he could; he looked up immediately, from the mass of his drawings, some suitable sheets with parts of a human body, and gave them to me to copy.

So I lived with my friend, and drew after Ramberg. I made good progress, for the drawings which he gave me were more advanced. I drew the whole anatomy of the human frame, and was never weary of repeating difficult parts, such as the feet. So passed some happy months. When we came to the month of June my hands trembled so much that I could no longer hold a pencil.

We consulted a skilful physician, and he found my situation dangerous. He said that in consequence of the campaign, my respiration was checked, that my internals were attacked by a consuming heat, and that, if I continued a fortnight in the same condition, I should inevitably be a corpse. He prescribed warm baths, and similar remedies to restore the action of the skin; cheering signs of improvement very soon appeared, and the continuation of my artistic studies was not to be thought of.

My friend had hitherto paid me the kindest care and attention; there was not the least thought or hint that I could afterwards become, a burden to him. I, however, aware of it, and as the uneasiness which I had long harboured in my head had probably hastened the breaking out of my illness, so did it now come forward in all its force, and heavy expenses before me on account of my recovery.

At such a time of external and internal embarrassment, the prospect opened to me of an appointment, with a commission, which had for its object the clothing of the Hanoverian army, and hence it was not surprising that, renouncing the artistic path, I yielded to the pressure of circumstances, solicited the appointment, and was delighted to obtain it.

My recovery was soon complete, and a state of health and cheerfulness returned which I had not enjoyed for a long time. I found myself able, in some measure, to requite the kindness my friend had generously shown me. The novelty of the services into which I was now to be initiated gave occupation to my mind. My superiors seemed to me men of the noblest views, and with my colleagues, some of whom had made the campaign in the same corps with me, I was soon on a footing of perfect intimacy.

Being now fairly settled, I began with some freedom to look about the city, which contained much that was worth observation, and, in leisure hours, I was never weary of rambling, over and over again, about its beautiful environs. With a pupil of Ramberg's, a promising young artist, I formed a close intimacy, and he was my constant companion in my rambles. And since I was forced to give up the practice of Art on account of my health and other circumstances, it was a great solace that I could, at least, daily converse about it with him. I took interest in his compositions, which he showed me in sketches, and about which we conversed. He introduced me to many instructive works; I read Winckelmann and Mengs; but, never having had before me the objects which they discuss, I could only imbibe generalities from their works, and received, indeed, but little benefit.

My friend, who had been born and brought up in the city, was in advance of me in every kind of mental culture, and had, what I entirely wanted, considerable acquaintance with the *belles lettres*. At that time Theodore Körner was the venerated hero of the day. My friend brought me the "Lyre and Sword," which did not fail to make a deep impression on me, as well as others, and to excite my admiration.

Much has been said of the artistical effect of poems, and many have ranked it very high; but it seems to me that the subject-matter is, after all, the chief point. Unconsciously, I made this experience in reading the "Lyre and Sword." For that I, like Körner, had fostered in my bosom an abhorrence of those who had been our oppressors for so many years; that I, like him, had fought for our freedom, and, like him, had been familiar with all those circumstances of tedious marches, nightly bivouacs, outpost service, and skirmishes, and amid them all had been filled with thoughts and feelings similar to his: this it was which gave to these poems so deep and powerful an echo in my heart.

Since nothing of import could have an effect upon me without moving me deeply and rendering me productive, so it was with these poems of Theodore Körner. I bethought me that I too had, in childhood and the years immediately following, written little poems from time to time, without caring any more about them, because at the time I attached no great value to things so easily produced, and because a certain mental ripeness is required for appreciation of poetical talent. This talent now in Körner appeared to me as something enviable and noble, and I felt a great desire to try if I could succeed, by following him in some degree.

The return of our patriotic warriors from France afforded me

a good opportunity, and, as I had fresh in my memory all the unspeakable hardships which the soldier must undergo in the field, while often no inconvenience is endured by the citizen in his comfortable home, I thought it would be good to set forth this contrast in a poem, and, by working on the feelings, to prepare for the returning troops a more cordial reception.

I had several hundred copies of this poem printed at my own expense, and distributed through the town. The effect produced was favourable beyond my expectations. It procured me a throng of very pleasant acquaintances; people sympathized with the views and feelings I had uttered, encouraged me to make similar attempts, and were generally of opinion that I had given proof of a talent which deserved further cultivation. The poem was copied into periodicals, printed, and sold separately in various places; I even had the pleasure of seeing it set to music by a very favourite composer, though, in fact, it was ill adapted for singing, on account of its length and rhetorical style.

Not a week passed now in which I was not happy enough to produce some new poem. I was now in my four-and-twentieth year: within me, a world of feelings, impulses, and good-will, was in full action; but I was entirely deficient in information and mental culture. The study of our great poets was recommended to me, especially of Schiller and Klopstock. I procured their works—I read, I admired them, without receiving much assistance from them; the path of these geniuses, though I was not aware of it at the time, being too far from the natural tendency of my own mind.

At this time, I first heard the name of Goethe, and obtained a volume of his poems. I read his songs again and again, and enjoyed a happiness which no words can express. I seemed as if I had not till now begun to wake, and attain real consciousness; it appeared to me that my own inmost soul, till then unknown even to myself, was reflected in these songs. Nowhere did I meet any learned or foreign matter beyond the reach of my own uncultivated thoughts and feelings; nowhere any names of outlandish and obsolete divinities, which to me said nothing; but, on the contrary, I found the human heart, with its desires, joys, and sorrows—I found a German nature, clear as the bright actual day—pure reality in the light of a mild glorification.

I lived whole weeks and months absorbed in these songs. Then I succeeded in obtaining "Wilhelm Meister," then "Goethe's Life," then his dramas. "Faust," from whose abysses of human nature and perdition I at first, shuddering, drew back, but whose profound enigmatical character ever attracted me again, I read always in holidays. My admiration

persons; I therefore resolved to carry out my scheme, and easily obtained the consent of my superiors; for the hours of the gymnasium chiefly fell in a part of the day when I was disengaged.

I therefore applied for admission; and, accompanied by my teacher, went on a Sunday forenoon to the worthy director to go through the requisite probation. He examined me with all possible kindness; but as I was not prepared for the traditional school questions, and with all my industry lacked the proper routine, I did not stand so well as I really ought to have done. However, on the assurance of my teacher that I knew more than appeared from my examination, and, in consideration of my uncommon ardour, the director placed me in the second class.

I need hardly say that a man of nearly twenty-five, and one already employed in the king's service, made but an odd figure among scholars who were, for the most part, mere boys, and that my situation was at first rather strange and unpleasant; but my great thirst for knowledge enabled me to overlook and endure everything. And, on the whole, I had no cause for complaint. The tutors esteemed me; the elder and better scholars of the class treated me in the most friendly manner, and even the most mischievous had forbearance enough not to play their tricks on me.

I was thus, on the whole, very happy in the attainment of my object, and proceeded with great zeal in this new path. I woke at five in the morning, and soon set about preparing my lessons. About eight I went to the school, and stayed till ten. Thence I hastened to my office, where my attendance was required till one. I then flew home, swallowed a little dinner, and was again at school soon after one. The hours then lasted till four, after which I was occupied in my office till seven, and devoted the remainder of the evening to preparation and private instruction.

Thus I lived some months; but my strength was unequal to such exertion, and the ancient saying, "No man can serve two masters," was confirmed. Want of free air and exercise, and of time and quiet for eating, drinking, and sleep, gradually reduced me to an unhealthy state; I found myself paralyzed both in body and mind, and saw that I must, as a matter of necessity, give up either the school or my office. As my subsistence depended on the latter, I had only the former alternative, and again left the school in the beginning of the spring of 1517. As I saw it was my destiny to make many trials, I did not regret that I had also made trial of a learned school.

Indeed, I had advanced a good step; and as I still had the University in view, there was no course left me but to go on

for a full year, and imagined the single scenes and acts down to the minutest details, till at last I wrote it, in the winter of 1820, in the morning hours of a few weeks. I was supremely happy in doing this, for the whole flowed forth easily and naturally. But, in opposition to the above-named poets, I had my eye too steadily fixed on real life, and never thought of the theatre. Thus it was more a quiet delineation of situations than a rapidly progressive action, and only poetical and rythmical where characters and situations required it. Subordinate persons had too much room, and the whole piece too much breadth.

I showed it to my most intimate friends and acquaintance, but it was not received as I wished: they objected that some scenes belonged to comedy, and, further, that I had read too little. As I had expected a better reception, I was at first quietly offended, but I gradually came to the conviction that my friends were not so very wrong, and that my piece, even if the characters were correctly drawn, and the whole was well designed, and produced with some degree of care and facility, was of far too small merit to be fit for public representation, with respect to the views of life which it developed.

When I consider my origin, and the little I had studied, this was not to be wondered at. I determined to remodel the piece, and arrange it for the theatre; but first to progress in my studies, that I might be capable to give everything a higher character. My anxiety to go to the University, where I hoped to attain all I wanted, and through which I expected to improve my position in life, became a positive passion. I resolved to publish my poems, as a chance of obtaining my wishes. As I had not that established reputation which would lead me to expect a handsome sum from a publisher, I chose the way of subscription as more suitable to my position.

This was conducted by my friends, and had the happiest result. I again went before my superiors with my views as to Göttingen, and asked for my dismissal. As they were convinced that I was really in earnest, and would not give way, they favoured my designs. On the representation of my chief, Colonel von Berger, the war-office (Kriegs-Canzlei) granted me my dismissal, and also a hundred and fifty dollars yearly for two years, to aid me in the prosecution of my studies.

I was now happy in the realization of the schemes I had cherished for years. I had the poems printed and sent off as quickly as possible, and derived from them, after deducting all expenses, a clear profit of one hundred and fifty dollars.

In May, 1821, I went to Göttingen, leaving one behind me I dearly loved.

studies of the
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I justified my decision entirely the wrong way. I thought it was too important to let go, and I was too great a hindrance to the cause. I devoted myself to the cause because I felt it was my duty, because his love was what I most desired, and I felt that I could give and receive the best of myself in the happiness of his life. I was a excellent material for a martyr's cement in a very real sense.

My daily morning
and the evening
and often till noon
a most excellent
faculties.

In the morning, I went to the beach. On the beach, I found a dead animal. I had assumed that it was a dead heap of mud, but it was not. Hence, my purpose of taking it to the hospital for further study.

I intended to have rested me, as far as I could, but he elevated his chair for some ideas relative to the development of the new system. These two hours were

I, therefore, not only took lodging, as the theoretical reason was not only in principle, but gave them the means of

In May, 1891, I was only a good publisher took the revolution at

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1822.

(Sup.*) *Sat., Sept. 21.*—This evening at Goethe's, with Counsellor (*Hofrath*) Meyer. The conversation turned principally upon mineralogy, chemistry, and natural science (*physik*). The phenomena of the polarization of light appeared to interest him particularly. He showed me various preparations, chiefly after his own designs, and expressed a wish to make some experiments with me.

In the course of our conversation, Goethe became more and more free and communicative. I remained more than an hour, and at my departure he said many kind things to me.

His figure is still to be called handsome; his forehead and eyes are extremely majestic. He is tall and well built, and so vigorous in appearance that one can scarcely comprehend how he has been able for some years to declare himself too old to enter into society, and to go to court.

(Sup.*) *Tues., Sept. 24.* The evening spent at Goethe's, with Meyer, Goethe's son, Frau von Goethe, and his physician, Counsellor (*Hofrath*) Rehbein. To-day, Goethe was particularly lively. He showed me some splendid lithographs from Stuttgart, the most perfect things of the kind I had ever seen. After that we conversed on scientific subjects, especially on the advancement of chemistry. Iodine and chlorine occupied him particularly; he spoke about these substances as if the new discoveries in chemistry had quite taken him by surprise. He had some iodine brought in, and volatilized it, before our

eyes, in the flame of a taper; by which means he did not fail to make us admire the violet-vapour as a pleasing confirmation of a law in his theory of colours.

(Sup.*) *Thurs., Oct. 1.*—To an evening party at Goethe's. I found amongst the assembled guests, Chancellor von Müller, President Peucer, Dr. Stephan Schütze, and Counsellor (Regierungsrath) Schmidt, which last played some sonatas of Beethoven's with rare perfection. I also derived great enjoyment from the conversations of Goethe and his daughter-in-law, who had all the cheerfulness of youth, and in whom an amiable disposition was united with infinite intelligence.

(Sup.*) *Thurs., Oct. 10.*—To an evening party at Goethe's, with the renowned Blumenbach from Göttingen. Blumenbach is old, but with an animated and cheerful expression. He has contrived to preserve the whole activity of youth. His deportment is such, that no one would know that a learned man stood before him. His cordiality is frank and jovial; he is quite unceremonious, and one is soon upon an easy footing with him. His acquaintance was to me as interesting as agreeable.

(Sup.*) *Tues., Nov. 5.*—An evening party at Goethe's. Amongst the assembled guests was the artist Kolbe. We were shown a beautifully executed painting by him—a copy of Titian's Venus, from the Dresden Gallery.

This evening, I also found with Goethe, Herr von Eschwege, and the celebrated Hummel. Hummel improvised for nearly an hour upon the piano, with a force and a talent of which it is impossible to form a conception unless one has heard him. I found his conversation simple and natural, and himself, for a virtuoso of such celebrity, surprisingly modest.

(Sup.*) *Tues., Dec. 3.*—At an evening party at Goethe's. Herren Riemer, Coudray, and Meyer, Goethe's son, and Frau von Goethe, were amongst those assembled.

The students at Jena are in an uproar, and a company of artillery has been sent to quiet them. Riemer read a collection of songs, which were prohibited, and which had thus given occasion or pretext to the revolt. All these songs, being read aloud, received decisive applause, on

[illegible]

added; "but to the physicians, notwithstanding, belongs the honour of having worked a little miracle upon me."

After a few minutes I withdrew. His colour is good; only he has much fallen away, and still breathes with some pain. It appeared to me that he spoke with greater difficulty than yesterday. The swelling of the left arm is very conspicuous. He keeps his eyes closed, and only opens them when he speaks.

(Sup.*) *Mon., Mar. 2.*—This evening at Goethe's, whom I had not seen for several days. He sat in his arm-chair, and had with him his daughter and Riemer. He was strikingly better. His voice had recovered its natural tone; his breathing was free; his hand was no longer swollen; his appearance again was what it had been in a state of health; and his conversation was easy. He rose and walked, without effort, into his sleeping-room and back. We took tea with him; and as this was the first time, I playfully reproached Frau von Goethe with having forgotten to place a nosegay on the tea-tray. Frau von Goethe directly took a coloured ribbon from her hat, and bound it on the tea-urn. This joke appeared to give Goethe much pleasure.

We afterwards examined a collection of imitated jewels, which the grand-duke had received from Paris.

(Sup.*) *Sat., Mar. 22.*—To-day, in celebration of Goethe's recovery, his Tasso was represented at the theatre, with a prologue by Riemer, spoken by Frau von Heigendorf. His bust was adorned with a crown of laurel, amidst the loud exclamations of the excited spectators. After the performance was over, Frau von Heigendorf went to Goethe's. She was still in the costume of Leonora, and presented to Goethe the crown of Tasso; which he took, to adorn with it the bust of the Grand-Duchess Alexandra.

(Sup.*) *Wed., Apr. 1.*—I brought Goethe, from her imperial highness, a number of the French "Journal des Modes," in which a translation of his works was discussed. On this occasion we conversed on "Rameau's Neffe" (Rameau's Nephew), the original of which has long been lost. Many Germans believe that the original never existed, and that it is all Goethe's own invention. Goethe, however, affirms that it would have been impossible for him

to imitate the German R.

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now the readers spoil the novelists, because, in order to find a publisher for their manuscripts, they must suit the prevailing bad taste of the public.

(Sup.*) *Sun., Apr. 26.*—I found Coudray and Meyer at Goethe's. We conversed on various subjects. "The library of the grand-duke," said Goethe, among other things, "contains a globe, which was made by a Spaniard in the reign of Charles V. There are some remarkable inscriptions upon it, as, for example, 'the Chinese are a people bearing a strong resemblance to the Germans.'"

"In former times," continued Goethe, "the African deserts were depicted on the maps, with representations of the wild beasts. In the present day, this custom is abandoned; the geographers prefer to leave us *carte blanche*."

(Sup.*) *Wed., May 6.*—This evening at Goethe's. He endeavoured to give me an idea of his theory of colours. "Light," said he, "is by no means a compound of different colours; neither can light alone produce any colour; for that requires a certain modification and blending of light and *shade*."

(Sup.*) *Tues., May 13.*—I found Goethe occupied with collecting his little poems and short addresses (*Blättchen*) to persons. "In earlier times," said he, "when I was more careless with my things, and neglected to make copies, I lost hundreds of such verses."

(Sup.*) *Mon., June 2.*—The chancellor, Riemer, and Meyer were with Goethe. We discussed Béranger's poems; and Goethe commented upon, and paraphrased some of them, with great originality and good humour.

The conversation then turned on natural science (*physik*) and meteorology. Goethe is on the point of working out a theory of the weather, in which he will ascribe the rise and fall of the barometer entirely to the action of the earth, and to her attraction and repulsion of the atmosphere.

"The scientific men, and especially the mathematicians," continued Goethe, "will not fail to consider my ideas perfectly ridiculous; or else they will do still better: they will totally ignore them in a most stately manner. But do you know why? Because they say that I am not one of the craft."

t of the learned by precept and example, and
 honorable. When entered into the world, I
 have been borne along with the stream, and
 have used in this; that such a man should be
 treated as dogmas, at a time when they were
 seated on their school-benches. I then
 exclaimed Goethe; "your name is not
 unknown to the rulers of Weimar. They wish
 them to be admitted into their ranks, and
 to sit, in the newest style. Now, therefore,
 always be supplied in thick leather, and
 two or three hundred years ago, and
 in strong leather. The talk of an
 could go hard with the teachers, but
 what his examiners were likely to do.
)---I arrived here a few days ago, but
 till to-day. He received me with the
 impression he made on me was such,
 lay as one of the happiest men I have
 I called to inquire, he fixed to the
 the time when he would be able to
 appointed time, and found a man
 aring to conduct me to his
 house made a very pleasant
 being showy, everything was
 even the casts from the
 ss, indicated Goethe's personal
 for Grecian antiquity. I was
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 tedly in my face.
 a glance around, I noticed a
 tive servant, to the right of
 he threshold of which there
 s a good omen of a fresh
 this apartment and opened
 ous, where he requested me
 ource me to his chamber. The
 ay in Eckermann's last book, and
 s in this book, as distinguished

was most cool and refreshing; on the floor was spread a carpet: the room was furnished with a crimson sofa and chairs, which gave a cheerful aspect; on one side stood a piano; and the walls were adorned with many pictures and drawings, of various sorts and sizes.

Through an open door opposite, one looked into a farther room, also hung with pictures, through which the servant had gone to announce me.

It was not long before Goethe came in, dressed in a blue frock-coat, and with shoes. What a sublime form! The impression upon me was surprising. But he soon dispelled all uneasiness by the kindest words. We sat down on the sofa. I felt in a happy perplexity, through his look and his presence, and could say little or nothing.

He began by speaking of my manuscript. "I have just come from *you*," said he; "I have been reading your writing all the morning; it needs no recommendation—it recommends itself." He praised the clearness of the style, the flow of the thought, and the peculiarity, that all rested on a solid basis, and had been thoroughly considered. "I will soon forward it," said he; "to-day I shall write to Cotta by post, and send him the parcel to-morrow." I thanked him with words and looks.

We then talked of my proposed excursion. I told him that my design was to go into the Rhineland, where I intended to stay at a suitable place, and write something new. First, however, I would go to Jena, and there await Herr von Cotta's answer.

Goethe asked whether I had acquaintance in Jena. I replied that I hoped to come in contact with Herr von Knebel; on which he promised me a letter which would insure me a more favourable reception. "And, indeed," said he, "while you are in Jena, we shall be near neighbours, and can see or write to one another as often as we please."

We sat a long while together, in a tranquil, affectionate mood. I was close to him; I forgot to speak for looking at him—I could not look enough. His face is so powerful and brown! full of wrinkles, and each wrinkle full of expression! And everywhere there is such nobleness and firmness, such repose and greatness! He spoke in a slow,

composed manner, as if he were a monarch.

himself, and I was extremely who, after his dearest

He then perfectly rich, clearness, or

"No one have many of you in himself. I see in Wein to be my citizen theatre. He should like a suitable time

We bade supremely loved and I felt towards me.

Wed., July Goethe, wrote him. I was different manner, perpetual and

He entered said he, "to come better to see and to is so wide, may serve two volumes (Frankfort among which that time.

with my distinguish the somewhat me what

such as you would expect from a man who receives by his air that which is breathed far above both him and his country, to be happy near him; I felt that his words were serious and tedious expectations, which were not fulfilled.

I read my letter, and remarked that I had said that, if one can treat of serious subjects, and find for many things, he will find time for what turn this may take. I had also said that I had read in Berlin, and I had said that I had read in the "Literary" Here he had pointed out to me what I had said, and he would do the same for me. Above all, I must not forget to tell you where I had said, and that I had said once more, and would do the same.

He gave her an affectionate farewell. I was not every word of his speech, and he was thoroughly well informed.

This morning I received a card from his own hand, desiring me to come and stay an hour. He had a letter from that of yesterday, and he had a manner of a youth. I had been sitting two third, but I had been sitting should go from me, and I had been sitting. I wish more and more to see you. But, as the letter had been brought of something of the past, and of ground-work for information. I had the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' (Notices) of the year 1811, and I had most all my little and big notices, which are not marked; but, as you had been in the tone of thought, you would easily see the others. I would have been happy to see these youthful productions, and tell of them. I wish to know what

they deserve a share in the same, and I have taken from my pocket a little sketch of my plan, and have no judgment about them. I have only to ask you to tell whether they are feasible, and whether they suit our present literary and scientific views. I have also some copies taken of them, which you may take along, to compare with the original. After having finished the survey, we must determine what we have to do. A trifling might not be left out, or turned upon the wrong side, and without injuring the rest, and even to the advantage of it.

I replied that I would do all in the power of man, and that nothing could gratify me more than to promote the execution of his intention.

"You will find your self perfectly at home here, and will, when you have once entered on the comparison, find it come quite naturally to you."

He then told me that he intended to stay at Weimar but a week, and that he should be glad if I could remain at Weimar till then; that was right, I said, I could do so, in mean time, and become better acquainted.

"I wish, too," said he, "that you would let me see some of a few days or weeks in doing, but would be in the way in the summer, till I return from Mainz, should extend to the winter. Already I have written about a dozen long and short things of the kind necessary to make your excursion short and pleasant."

"You will find there the most various means of study, and a very cultivated literary circle; besides, the country presents so many objects, that you may take fifty walks, each different from the others, each pleasant, and almost all suited for and adapted to education. You will find there plenty of leisure and opportunity to write many new things for yourself, and to accomplish my designs."

I could make no objection to such good proposals, and consented joyfully to them all. When I departed he was especially amiable, and he fixed another hour this afternoon to-morrow for further converse.

Mon., June 16. I have lately been frequently with Goethe. To-day, we talked principally of *Hamlet*, and declared my opinion also of his *Frankfort* comedy.

calling them echoes of his academic years, an expression which seemed to please him, as marking the point of view from which these youthful productions should be regarded.

He then gave me the first eleven numbers of "*Kunst und Alterthum*,"* that I might take them with me to Jena, together with the Frankfort critiques as a second task.

"It is my wish," said he, "that you should study carefully these numbers, and not only make a general index of contents, but also set down what subjects are not to be looked upon as concluded, that I may thus see at once what threads I have to take up again and spin longer. This will be a great assistance to me, and so far an advantage to you, that, in this practical way, you will more keenly observe and apprehend the import of each particular treatise, than by common perusal, regulated solely by inclination."

I found these remarks judicious, and said that I would willingly undertake this labour also.

Thurs., June 19.—I was to have gone to Jena to-day; but Goethe yesterday requested earnestly that I would stay till Sunday, and then go by the post. He gave me yesterday the letters of recommendation, and also one for the family of Frommann. "You will enjoy their circle," said he; "I have passed many delightful evenings there. Jean Paul, Tieck, the Schlegels, and all the other distinguished men of Germany, have visited there, and always with delight; and even now it is the union-point of many learned men, artistes, and other persons of note. In a few weeks, write to me at Marienbad, that I may know how you are going on, and how you are pleased with Jena. I have requested my son to visit you there during my absence."

I felt very grateful to Goethe for so much care, and was very happy to see that he regarded me as one of his own, and wished me to be so considered.

Saturday, the 21st June, I bade farewell to Goethe, and on the following day went to Jena, where I established myself in a rural dwelling, with very good, respectable people. In the families of von Knebel and Frommann, I found, on Goethe's recommendation, a cordial reception

* *Art and Antiquity.*

and very instructive society. I made the best possible progress with the work I had taken with me, and had, besides, the pleasure of receiving a letter from Herr von Cotta, in which he not only declared himself ready to publish my manuscript which had been sent him, but promised me a handsome remuneration, adding that I myself should superintend the printing at Jena.

Thus my subsistence was secured for at least a year, and I felt the liveliest desire to produce something new at this time, and so to found my future prosperity as an author.

I hoped that I had already, in my "*Beiträge zur Poesie*," come to an end with theory and criticism; I had in them endeavoured to get clear views as to the principal laws of art, and my whole inner nature now urged me to a practical application. I had plans for innumerable poems, both long and short, also for dramas of various sorts; and I had now, as I thought, only to think which way I should turn, to produce one after the other, with some degree of convenience to myself.

I was not long content in Jena; my life there was too quiet and uniform. I longed for a great city, where there was not only a good theatre, but where a popular life was developed on a great scale, that I might seize upon important elements of life, and advance my own mental culture as rapidly as possible. In such a town, too, I hoped to live quite unobserved, and to be free always to isolate myself for completely undisturbed production.

Meanwhile, I had sketched the index which Goethe wished for the first four volumes of "*Kunst und Alterthum*," and sent it to Marienbad with a letter, in which I openly expressed my plans and wishes. I received in answer the following lines:—

"The index arrived just at the right time, and corresponds precisely with my wishes and intentions. Let me, when I return, find the Frankfort criticisms arranged in a like manner, and receive my best thanks, which I already silently pay beforehand, by carrying about with me your views, situation, wishes, aims, and plans, so that, on my return, I may be able to discuss more solidly your future welfare. To-day I will say no more. My departure from Marienbad gives me much to think of and to do, while my

have discussed a number of
ways in which we can improve

I was much pleased to hear that you would regulate your visit.

"I will provide you with a list of names of persons who are working together in Western Africa, and in the various countries of the higher circles, a so-called circle of the world, and in the various cities. Besides, many of them are working in the East, and with me. With them I am in contact, and I am in contact with them, and you will find them very useful and instructive."

the other they were in the same position as the first group, and the third group was in the same position as the first group.

"Where else," he asked, "can I find a place so good in such a narrow space? The room has a fine library, and a theater, and a billiard room, and I will not yield to the best of them. I am sure that I repeat it, stay with me here, and I will make Weimar your headquarters. I will show you ways to all quarters of the world, and I will travel, and see, by day and night, all that is to be seen there fifty years, and when I am tired, I will be always glad to return to Weimar."

[illegible]

Jena, Thurs., Sept. 14. Yesterday I had the pleasure of an interview with him. What he said of himself, of his work, of his important; to me it was quite new and interesting. He had a most beneficial influence on all my life. The more I know of him, the more of Germany should know of him, as it may be said of all great men.

He introduced the following resolution: "That the committee on the subject of the proposed new constitution, which had written any poems this summer."

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The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the country's development.

The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's economic development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's economic development. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the country's economic development.

The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's social development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's social development. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the country's social development.

has only the task of animating the whole. He preserves his own fulness, for he needs to part with but little of himself, and there is much less loss of time and power, since he has only the trouble of execution. Indeed, I would advise the choice of subjects which have been worked before. How many *Iphigenias* have been written! yet they are all different, for each writer considers and arranges the subject differently; namely, after his own fashion.

"But, for the present, you had better lay aside all great undertakings. You have striven long enough; it is time that you should enter into the cheerful period of life, and for the attainment of this, the working out of small subjects is the best expedient."

During this conversation, we had been walking up and down the room. I could do nothing but assent, for I felt the truth of each word through my whole being. At each step I felt lighter and happier, for I must confess that various grand schemes, of which I had not as yet been able to take a clear view, had been no little burden to me. I have now thrown them aside, and shall let them rest till I can take up and sketch off one subject and one part after another in cheerfulness, as by study of the world I gradually become master of the several parts of the material.

I feel, through these words of Goethe's, several years wiser, and perceive, in the very depths of my soul, the good fortune of meeting with a true master. The advantage is incalculable.

What shall I not learn from him this winter! what shall I not gain merely from intercourse with him, even in times when he does not speak what is so very important! His personality, his mere presence, seems to educate me, even when he does not speak a word.

Weimar, Thurs., Oct. 2.—I came here yesterday from Jena, favoured by very agreeable weather. Immediately after my arrival, Goethe, by way of welcoming me to Weimar, sent me a season-ticket for the theatre. I passed yesterday in making my domestic arrangements; and the rather, as they were very busy at Goethe's; for the French Ambassador from Frankfort, Count Reinhard, and the Prussian State Councillor (*Staatsrath*) Schultz, from Berlin, had come to visit him.

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forenoon I was invited to the studio of the artist, and was in every way made comfortable. I was permitted to take my leave, however, at the hour appointed with the State Commission, and to return to the next room, where I found the artist busy in looking at the works of art, and in talking with the ladies for further directions.

her for further directions. "I am very glad," said Schuler, "to hear, and assist the efforts of the

He has been telling me that he has
s himself from your work, and that
complete unity now.

ed that I had no other means of procuring the literature; and that, in the absence of any other person, I had willingly had made, at my own expense, the designs. I added, that a person who had been employed would have made the designs, and that I had been

I hoped, by this means, to have my health restored in 2 years; and thus, in the end, to be enabled to do the work for which I was at present unequalled.

tainly," replied Schultz, "the present is a most extraordinary time and a most extraordinary world. I, too, have come to this conclusion, and I am sure you will do so from his great mind."

then inquired about the dinner which Goethe had written that I hoped, in a few days, to see, and would not take the trouble to go to Berlin, if I could not be separated within a couple of days.

[illegible]

On the green curtains being drawn aside, the picture was before my eyes in a broad light, and I was delighted to contemplate it quietly.

"Yes," said Goethe, "the ancients had not only great intentions, but they carried them into effect. On the contrary, we moderns have also great intentions, but are seldom able to bring them out with such power and freshness as we have thought them."

Now came Riemer, Meyer, Chancellor von Müller, and many other distinguished gentlemen and ladies of the court. Goethe's son and Frau von Goethe, with whom I was now for the first time made acquainted, also entered. The rooms filled gradually, and there was life and cheerfulness in them all. Some pretty youthful foreigners were present, with whom Goethe spoke French.

The society pleased me, all were so free and unconstrained: each stood or sat, laughed and talked with this person and that, just as he pleased. I had a lively conversation with young Goethe about Horwald's "Bild" (picture), which was given a few days since. We had the same opinion about the piece, and I was greatly pleased to see this young man expound the different points with so much animation and intelligence.

Goethe himself appeared very amiable in society. He went about from one to another, and seemed to prefer listening, and hearing his guests talk, to talking much himself. Frau von Goethe would often come and lean upon him, and kiss him. I had lately said to him that I enjoyed the theatre highly, and that I felt great pleasure in giving myself up to the impression of the piece, without reflecting much upon it. This to him seemed right, and suited to my present state.

He came to me with Frau von Goethe. "This is my daughter-in-law," said he; "do you know each other?"

We told him that we had just become acquainted.

"He is as much a child about a theatre as you, Ottilie!" said he; and we exchanged congratulations upon this taste which we had in common. "My daughter," continued he, "never misses an evening."

"That is all very well," said I, "as long as they give

* A drama of some celebrity. — *Thalia*.

ely placed; but what is the use of that? It is a waste of money." "I said, 'Gentle,' not 'gentle'!"

"It are found to be a waste of money," said the man, "if you are not that kind of a person. If you are not that kind of a person, it is a waste of money."

"You throw a lot of money away," said the man, "if you do not know how to use it. If you do not know how to use it, it is a waste of money."

"Now, I am not a person who is not a person," said the man, "if you are not that kind of a person. If you are not that kind of a person, it is a waste of money."

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After dinner, Goethe showed me some papers, and began talking to his theory of colours. "The subject is new to me; I neither understand the physics, nor the metaphysics," he said about them. "Nevertheless, I have a great desire that it would afford me leisure and opportunity to devote myself to a little into this science."

Tues., Oct. 21. I went to see Goethe, who had just returned. We talked of his "Pandora." I told him that I thought the poem was to be regarded as a whole, or at least as a unity, in every thing further. He said there was nothing of the kind, but that he had written no more for the very reason that the first part was planned on a larger scale, so that he could not afterwards get through with it. He said that what was done might be regarded as a whole, but he was quite easy about the matter.

I said that I had only penetrated the meaning of the difficult poem by degrees, namely, after I had read it many times as almost to know it by heart. Goethe smiled and said, "I can well believe that; for a little part is, as one may say, wedged one within another."

I added, that I could not be perfectly satisfied with Schubarth's remarks upon this poem, who said there were all which had been said separately in "Werther," "Wilhelm Meister," "Faust," and the "Elective Affinities," thus making the matter very incomprehensible and dull. "Schubarth," said Goethe, "often goes a little wrong, but he is very clever, and all his words are true, and of a deep meaning."

We spoke of Uhland, and Goethe said, "When I see great effects, I am apt to suppose great exertion, and, with a popularity so extensive as that of Uhland, there must be something superior about him. However, I can scarcely form a judgment as to his poems ("Goethe"). I have read his book with the best intentions, but failed miserably once in many weak and gloomy poems that I could not understand. I then tried his ballads, where I really did find distinguished talent, and could plainly see that there was some foundation for his celebrity."

I then asked Goethe his opinion as to the kind of verse proper for German tragedy. "Prose in Germany," he replied, "will scarcely come to an agreement on that point."

here, and that you will often have again." "Then," said I, "I will go; it will, perhaps, do me good to laugh." "Stay with me, however," said Goethe, "till six o'clock: we shall have time to say a word or two."

Stadelman brought in two wax lights, which he set on the table. Goethe desired me to sit down, and he would give me something to read. And what should this be but his newest, dearest poem, his "Elegy from Marienbad!"

I must here go back a little for a circumstance connected with this poem. Immediately after Goethe's return from Marienbad, the report had been spread that he had there made the acquaintance of a young lady equally charming in mind and person, and had been inspired with a passion for her. When her voice was heard in the Brunnen-Allee, he had always seized his hat, and hastened down to join her. He had missed no opportunity of being in her society, and had passed happy days: the parting had been very painful, and he had, in this excited state, written a most beautiful poem, which, however, he looked upon as a sort of consecrated thing, and kept hid from every eye.

I believed this story, because it not only perfectly accorded with his bodily vigour, but also with the productive force of his mind, and the healthy freshness of his heart. I had long had a great desire to see the poem itself, but naturally felt unwilling to ask Goethe. I had, therefore, to congratulate myself on the fortunate moment which brought it before me.

He had, with his own hand, written these verses, in Roman characters, on fine vellum paper, and fastened them with a silken cord into a red morocco case; so that, from the outside, it was obvious that he prized this manuscript above all the rest.

I read it with great delight, and found that every line confirmed the common report. The first verse, however, intimated that the acquaintance was not first made, but only renewed, at this time. The poem revolved constantly on its own axis, and seemed always to return to the point whence it began. The close, wonderfully broken off, made quite a deep and singular impression.

When I had finished, Goethe came to me again. "Well," said he, "there I have shown you something good. But

you shall tell me what you think a few days hence." I was very glad that Goethe, by these words, had refrained from passing a judgment at the moment, for the impression was too new, and too hastily received, to allow me to say anything that was appropriate.

Goethe promised to let me see it again in a few days, and the hour. The time for the theatre had now arrived, and I separated with an affectionate pressure of the hand.

The "Chess-machine" was, perhaps, a good play, well acted, but I saw it not, my thoughts were with Goethe. When the play was over, I passed by his house; it was well lighted up; I heard music from within, and regretted that I had not stayed there.

The next day, I was told that the young Polish lady, Madame Szymanowska, in whose honour the party had been given, had played on the piano in most excellent style to the enchantment of the whole company. I learned, too, that Goethe became acquainted with her last summer at Marienbad, and that she had now come to visit him.

At noon, Goethe sent me a little manuscript, "Stanzas by Zauper," in which I found some very apt remarks. I sent him some poems I had written this summer at Jena, and of which I had spoken to him.

Wed., Oct. 29.—This evening I went to the theatre, where were lighting the candles. I found him in a very elevated state of mind; his eyes sparkled with the reflection of the candlelight; his whole expression was one of exuberant youth, and power.

As he walked up and down with me, he asked me to read to speak of the poems which I sent him yesterday.

"I understand now," said he, "why you talk so much at Jena, of writing a poem on the mountains. I now know how to do so; begin at once with *Walden*. You must not have a special sense and feeling for natural objects."

"Only two words would I say about your poem. You stand now at that point where you must necessarily break through to the really high and difficult part of art—the apprehension of what is individual. You must do some degree of violence to yourself to get out of the *Idyll*. You have talent, and have got so far, now you must do this."

"At the same time," says the author, "the United States has been able to avoid the economic disaster which has overtaken the nations of Europe."

There were two persons in the room, a man and a woman, both of whom were wearing dark clothing. The man was wearing a dark jacket and the woman was wearing a dark dress. They were both looking at the man who was speaking. The man was speaking in a low, steady voice. He was looking at the woman and she was looking at him. They were both looking at each other. The man was speaking in a low, steady voice. He was looking at the woman and she was looking at him. They were both looking at each other.

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It was now time for the theatre. "So you are going to Finland?" called he, jestingly, after me; for the piece was "*Johann von Finland*" (*John of Finland*), by Frau von Weissenthurn.

The piece did not lack effective situations, but it was so overloaded with pathos, and the design was so obvious in every part, that, on the whole, it did not impress me favourably. The last act, however, pleased me much, and reconciled me to the rest.

This piece suggested to me the following remark: Characters which have been but indifferently drawn by the poet gain on the stage, because the actors, as living men, make them living beings, and impart to them some sort of individuality. But the finely drawn characters of the great poet, which already stand out with a sharply marked individuality, must lose on the stage, because actors are not often perfectly fitted for such parts, and very few can completely lay aside their own individualities. If the actor be not the counterpart of the character, or if he do not possess the power of utterly laying aside his own personality, a mixture ensues, and the character loses its purity. Therefore, the play of a really great poet only appears in single figures, just as it was originally intended.

Mos., Nov. 3. I went to Goethe at five o'clock. I heard them, as I came upstairs, laughing very loud, and talking in the great room. The servant said that the Polish lady dined there to day, and that the company had not yet left the table. I was going away, but he said he had orders to announce me, and that perhaps his master would be glad of my arrival, as it was now late. I let him have his way, and waited a while, after which Goethe came out in a very cheerful mood, and took me to the opposite room. My visit seemed to please him. He had a bottle of wine brought at once, and filled for me and occasionally for himself.

"Before I forget it," said he, looking about the table for something, "let me give you a concert-ticket. Madame Szymanowska gives, to-morrow evening, a public concert at the Stadthaus, and you must not fail to be there." I replied that I certainly should not repeat my late folly. "They say she plays very well," I added. "Admirably," said Goethe. "As well as Hummel?" asked I. "You

should know what he has to see, and what properly belongs to him, on a journey."

The Chancellor came in. He talked a little with Goethe, and then spoke to me very kindly, and with much acuteness, about a little paper which he had lately read. He soon returned to the ladies, among whom I heard the sound of a piano.

When he had left us, Goethe spoke highly of him, and said, "All these excellent men, with whom you are now placed in so pleasant a relation, make what I call a home, to which one is always willing to return."

I said that I already began to perceive the beneficial effect of my present situation, and that I found myself gradually leaving my ideal and theoretic tendencies, and more and more able to appreciate the value of the present moment.

"It would be a pity," said Goethe, "if it were not so. Only persist in this, and hold fast by the present. Every situation may, every moment is of infinite worth; for it is the representative of a whole eternity."

After a short pause, I turned the conversation to Tiefurt, and the mode of treating it. "The subject," said I, "is complex, and it will be difficult to give it proper form. It would be most convenient to me to treat it in prose."

"For that," said Goethe, "the subject is not sufficiently significant. The so-called didactic, descriptive form would, on the whole, be eligible; but even that is not perfectly appropriate. The best method will be to treat the subject in ten or twelve separate little poems, in rhyme, but in various measures and forms, such as the various sides and views demand, by which means light will be given to the whole." This advice I at once adopted as judicious. "Why, indeed," continued he, "should you not for once use dramatic means, and write a conversation or so with the gardener? By this fragmentary method you make your task easy, and can better bring out the various characteristic sides of the subject. A great, comprehensive whole, on the other hand, is always difficult; and he who attempts it seldom produces anything complete."

Wed., Nov. 10. Goethe has not been very well for the last few days; it seems he cannot get rid of a very bad cold. He coughs a great deal, very loud, and with much force;

but, nevertheless, the audience seem to have profited, for he generously hid his hand in his pocket.

I pushed half an hour with him, then, before the theatre. He sat on his bench, with his back sunk in a cushion, and I could not speak without ill-humour. After we had talked a little, he wished to receive a poem with which I intended to leave my name, called "Hind and Alphabetum." He permitted it to go, and I found out where it was kept. I took the book, and sat down at a writing-table to read it, as a little bit of exercise to him.

This poem was singular in its character, and, though I did not fully understand it on the first reading, it affected me in a peculiar manner. The advertisement of the *Paris* was its subject, and it was treated as a Trillogy. The prevailing tone seemed to me that of an alien world, and the mode of representation such that I felt it very difficult to form a lively notion of the subject. The personal presence of Goethe was also rather painful to the rough abstraction: now I heard him reading, now I heard him sigh; and thus I was, as it were, divided into two: one half read, and the other felt his presence. I was forced to read the poem again and again, only to approximate to it. However, the more I perused it, and the more significant in character, and the higher in fact, did it become to me.

At last I spoke to Goethe, both as to the subject and treatment, and he gave me much new light by means of his remarks.

"Indeed," said he, "the treatment is very terse, and one must go deep into it to seize upon its meaning. Poems, even to me, like a Damascus blade, have to be cut of steel wire. I have borne this subject about with me for forty years; so that it has had time to get clear of everything extraneous."

"It will produce an effect," said I, "when it comes before the public."

"Ah, the public!" sighed Goethe.

"Would it not be well," said I, "to aid the comprehension, and to add an explanation as we do to pictures, when we endeavour to give life to what is actually present, by describing the preceding circumstances?"

"I think not," said he; "with pictures it is another

matter; but, as a poem is already expressed in words, one word only cancels another."

I thought Goethe was here very happy in pointing out the rock on which those who interpret poems are commonly wrecked. Still it may be questioned whether it be not possible to avoid this rock, and affix some explanatory words to a poem without at all injuring the delicacy of its inner life.

When I went away, he asked me to take the sheets of "Kunst und Alterthum" home with me, that I might read the poem again, and also the "Receit from the East" (*Oestliche Rezen*) of Rückert, a poet whom he seems highly to value, and to regard with great expectation.

(*Sup.**) *Tues., Nov. 11.* No evening company at Goethe's, who has again been suffering for some time. His feet were wrapped in a woollen coverlet, which he had taken with him everywhere since the campaign in Champagne. Apropos of this coverlet, he related an anecdote of the year 1806, when the French had occupied Jena, and the chaplain of a French regiment required some hangings to adorn his altar. "He was supplied with a splendid piece of crimson stuff," said Goethe; "but this was not good enough for him. He complained of this to me. 'Send me the stuff,' said I; 'I will see if I can procure something better.' In the mean time, we were just bringing out a new piece at the theatre, and I made use of the magnificent red stuff to decorate my actors. As for my chaplain, he received nothing else; he was forgotten; and he must have seen what good he got."

Wed., Nov. 12. Towards evening, I went to see Goethe; but heard, before I went upstairs, that the Prussian minister, von Humboldt, was with him, at which I was pleased, being convinced that this visit of an old friend would cheer him up and do him good.

I then went to the theatre, where "Die Schwestern von Prag" (the Sisters of Prague), got up to perfection, was done admirably, so that it was impossible to leave off laughing throughout the whole piece.

Thurs., Nov. 13. Some days ago, as I was walking one fine afternoon towards Erfurt, I was joined by an elderly man, whom I supposed, from his appearance, to be an

opulent citizen. We had not talked together long before the conversation turned upon Goethe. I asked him whether he knew Goethe. "Know him?" said he, with some delight; "I was his valet when he was twenty years!" He then launched into the praise of his former master. I begged to hear something of Goethe's youth, and he gladly consented to gratify me.

"When I first lived with him," said he, "he must have been about twenty-seven years old; he was strong, manly, and elegant in his person. I could easily have embraced him in my arms."

I asked whether Goethe, in that early part of his life here, had not been very gay. "Certainly," replied he; "he was always gay with the day, but never when they passed a certain limit; in that case he usually found grave. Always working and meditating, and always bent on art and science; that was especially the case with my master. The duke often visited him in the evening, and then they often talked on I would respect till late at night, so that I got extremely tired, and sometimes when the duke would go. Even then he was interested in art and science.

"One time he rang in the middle of the night, and when I entered his room I found he had rolled himself up to the window, and was lying there, looking out into the sky. 'Have you seen nothing in the sky?' asked he of me; when I answered in the negative, he bade me run to the guard-house, and ask the man on duty if he had seen nothing. I went there; the guard said he had seen nothing, and I returned with this answer to my master, who remained in the same position, lying in his bed, and gazing upon the sky. 'Listen,' said he to me; 'this is an important moment; there is now an earthquake, or one is preparing to take place;' then he made me sit down on the bed, and showed me by what signs he knew this."

I asked the good old man "what sort of weather it was."

"It was very cloudy," he replied, "moon-shine, very still and sultry."

I asked if he at once believed there was an earthquake on Goethe's word.

"Yes," said he, "I believed it, for things always happened as he said they would. Next day he related his observations at court, when a lady whispered to her neighbour, 'Only listen, Goethe is dreaming.' But the duke, and all the men present, believed Goethe, and the correctness of his observations was soon confirmed; for, in a few weeks, the news came that a part of Messina, on that night, had been destroyed by an earthquake."

Fri., Nov. 14.—Towards evening Goethe sent me an invitation to call upon him. Humboldt, he said, was at court, and therefore I should be all the more welcome. I found him, as I did some days ago, sitting in his arm-chair; he gave me a friendly shake of the hand, and spoke to me with heavenly mildness. The chancellor soon joined us. We sat near Goethe, and carried on a light conversation, that he might only have to listen. The physician, Counsellor (*Hofrath*) Rehbein, soon came also. To use his own expression, he found Goethe's pulse quite lively and easy. At this we were highly pleased, and joked with Goethe on the subject. "If I could only get rid of the pain in my left side!" he said. Rehbein prescribed a plaster there; we talked on the good effect of such a remedy, and Goethe consented to it. Rehbein turned the conversation to Marienbad, and this appeared to awaken pleasant reminiscences in Goethe. Arrangements were made to go there again, it was said that the great duke would join the party, and these prospects put Goethe in the most cheerful mood. They also talked about Madame Szymanowska, and mentioned the time when she was here, and all the men were solicitous for her favour.

When Rehbein was gone, the chancellor read the Indian poems, and Goethe, in the mean while, talked to me about the Marienbad Elegy.

At eight o'clock, the chancellor went, and I was going too, but Goethe bade me stop a little, and I sat down. The conversation turned on the stage, and the fact that "Wallenstein" was to be done to-morrow. This gave occasion to talk about Schiller.

"I have," said I, "a peculiar feeling towards Schiller. Some scenes of his great dramas I read with genuine love and admiration; but presently I meet with something

[illegible]

"But I am concerned," he said, "that the
 tenor of the conversation has been too
 purely will-power oriented. It is possible
 do not dream."

Sat., Nov. 15. In the evening I went to the theatre where I for the first time saw the play of *William Tell*. I had not said too much of the greatness of this play, and now, to my inmost soul. The actors, who were all of the first rank, to the time when they were in the prime of their powers, of Schiller and Goethe, gave an admirable performance.

personages, such as on a mere reading were not presented to my imagination with all their individuality. On this account the piece had an extraordinary effect upon me, and I could not get it out of my head the whole night.

Sun., Nov. 16. In the evening at Goethe's; he was still sitting in his elbow-chair, and seemed rather weak. His first question was about "Wallenstein." I gave him an account of the impression the piece had made upon me as represented on the stage, and he heard me with visible satisfaction.

M. Soret came in, led in by Frau von Goethe, and remained about an hour. He brought from the duke some gold medals, and by showing and talking about these seemed to entertain Goethe very pleasantly.

Frau von Goethe and M. Soret went to court, and I was left alone with Goethe.

Remembering his promise to show me again his Marienbad Elegy at a fitting opportunity, Goethe arose, put a light on the table, and gave me the poem. I was delighted to have it once more before me. He quietly seated himself again, and left me to an undisturbed perusal of the piece.

After I had been reading a while, I turned to say something to him, but he seemed to be asleep. I therefore used the favourable moment, and read the poem again and again with a rare delight. The most youthful glow of love, tempered by the moral elevation of the mind, seemed to me its pervading characteristic. Then I thought that the feelings were more strongly expressed than we are accustomed to find in Goethe's other poems, and imputed this to the influence of Byron, which Goethe did not deny.

"You see the product of a highly impassioned mood," said he. "While I was in it I would not for the world have been without it, and now I would not for any consideration fall into it again."

"I wrote that poem immediately after leaving Marienbad, while the feeling of all I had experienced there was fresh. At eight in the morning, when we stopped at the first stage, I wrote down the first strophe; and thus I went on composing in the carriage, and writing down at every stage what I had just composed in my head, so that by the evening the whole was on paper. Thence it has a certain

directness, and is, as I may say, poured out at once, may be an advantage to it as a whole."

"It is," said I, "quite peculiar in its kind, and so other poem of yours."

"That," said he, "may be, because I staked the present moment as a man stakes a considerable sum on a card, and sought to enhance its value as much as possible without exaggeration."

These words struck me as very important, inasmuch as they threw a light on Goethe's method of explaining that many-sidedness which has excited so much admiration.

It was now near nine o'clock; Goethe bade me good night, and I went to Stadelmann, which I did.

He then let Stadelmann put the prescribed plaster on the left side. I turned to the window, but heard him laughing to Stadelmann that his illness was not lessening, and assumed a character of permanence. When the plaster was over, I sat down by him again for a little while. He then complained to me also that he had not slept for some time, and had no appetite. "The winter," said he, "thrusts me away; I can put nothing together; my mind is out of force." I tried to soothe him, requesting him not to devote so much of his labours at present, and representing that there was reason to hope he would soon be better. He said he, "I am not impatient; I have lived through many such situations not to have learned to suffer and to endure." He was in his white flannel gown, and a white coverlet was laid on his knees and feet. "I shall not go to bed," he said, "but will pass the night thus in my chair. I cannot properly sleep."

In the mean while the time for my departure was at hand; he extended his dear hand to me, and I left.

When I went down into the servants' room, to fetch my cloak, I found Stadelmann much agitated. He was alarmed about his master, for if he complained, it was a bad sign indeed! His feet, too, which had lately been a little swollen, had suddenly become thin. He was called to the physician early in the morning, to tell him these signs. I endeavoured to pacify him, but he would not be talked out of his fears.

(*Sup.**) *Sun.*, Nov. 16. Goethe is not any better. The grand-duchess sent him, this evening, by me, some very beautiful medals, the examination of which might perhaps divert and cheer him. Goethe was manifestly pleased at this delicate attention on the part of the duchess. He complained to me that he felt the same pain in the left side, which had preceded his severe illness last winter. "I cannot work," said he, "I cannot read, and even thinking only annoyed, with me in my happy moments of alleviation."

(*Sup.**) *Mon.*, Nov. 17. Humboldt is here. I have spent a few moments with Goethe to-day; when it appeared to me that Humboldt's presence and conversation had a favourable effect upon him. His disease does not appear to be merely of a physical kind. It seems more likely that the violent affection which he formed for a young lady, at Marienbad, in the summer, and which he is now trying to overcome, may be considered as the principal cause of his present illness.

Mon., Nov. 17. When I entered the theatre this evening, many persons pressed towards me, asking very anxiously how Goethe was. His illness must have spread rapidly over the town, and perhaps has been exaggerated. Some said he had water on the chest. I felt depressed all the evening.

Wed., Nov. 19. Yesterday, I walked about in a state of great anxiety. No one besides his family was admitted to see him.

In the evening I went to his house, and he received me.

I found him still in his arm-chair; his outward appearance was quite the same as when I left him on Sunday, but he was in good spirits.

We talked of Zäuper, and the widely differing results which proceed from the study of ancient literature.

Fri., Nov. 21. Goethe sent for me. To my great joy I found him walking up and down in his chamber. He gave me a little book, the "Ghazals" of Count Platen. "I had intended," said he, "to say something of this in 'Kunst und Alterthum,' for the poems deserve it; but my present condition will not allow me to do anything. Just see if you can fathom the poems and get anything out of them."

I promised to make the attempt.

“‘Ghazels,’” continued he, “have this peculiarity, that they demand great fulness of meaning. The constantly recurring similar rhymes must find ready for them a store of similar thoughts. Therefore it is not every one that succeeds in them; but these will please you.” The physician came in, and I departed.

Mon., Nov. 24.—Saturday and Sunday I studied the poems: this morning I wrote down my view of them, and sent it to Goethe; for I had heard that no one had been admitted to him for some days, the physician having forbidden him to talk.

However, he sent for me this evening. When I entered, I found a chair already placed for me near him; he gave me his hand, and was extremely affectionate and kind. He began immediately to speak of my little critique. “I was much pleased with it,” said he; “you have a fine talent. I wish now to tell you something,” he continued; “if literary proposals should be made to you from other quarters, refuse them, or at least consult me before deciding upon them; for since you are now linked with me, I should not like to see you connected with others also.”

I replied that I wished to belong to him alone, and had at present no reason to think of new connections.

This pleased him, and he said that we should this winter get through much pleasant work together.

We then talked of the “Ghazels.” Goethe expressed his delight at the completeness of these poems, and that our present literature produced so much that was good.

“I wish,” said he, “to recommend the newest talent to your especial study and observation. I wish you to become acquainted with whatever our literature brings forth worthy of note, and to place before me whatever is meritorious, that we may discuss it in the numbers of ‘Kunst und Alterthum,’ and mention what is good, sound, and elevated, with due acknowledgment. For, with the best intentions, I cannot, at my advanced age, and with my manifold duties, do this without aid from others.”

I said I would do this, and was very glad to find that our latest writers and poets were more interesting to Goethe than I had supposed.

He sent me the latest literary periodicals to assist in the proposed task. I did not go to him for several days, nor was I invited. I heard his friend Zelter had come to visit him.

(Sup.*) *Fri.*, Nov. 28.—The first part of Meyer's "History of Art," which has just appeared, seems to occupy Goethe very agreeably. He spoke of it to-day in terms of the highest praise.

Mon., Dec. 1.—To-day, I was invited to dine with Goethe. I found Zelter sitting with him when I arrived. Both advanced to meet me, and gave me their hands. "Here," said Goethe, "we have my friend Zelter. In him you make a valuable acquaintance. I shall send you soon to Berlin; he will take excellent care of you." "Is Berlin a good place?" said I. "Yes," replied Zelter, laughing; "a great deal may be learned and unlearned there."

We sat down and talked on various subjects. I asked after Schubarth. "He visits me at least every week," said Zelter. "He is married now, but has no appointment, because he has offended the philologists in Berlin."

Zelter asked me then if I knew Immermann. I said I had often heard his name, but as yet knew nothing of his writings. "I made his acquaintance at Münster," said Zelter; "he is a very hopeful young man, and it is a pity that his appointment leaves him no more time for his art." Goethe also praised his talent. "But we must see," said he, "how he comes out; whether he will submit to purify his taste, and, with respect to form, adopt the acknowledged best models as his standard. His original striving has its merit, but leads astray too easily."

Little Walter now came jumping in, asking many questions, both of Zelter and his grandfather. "When thou comest, uneasy spirit," said Goethe, "all conversation is spoiled." However, he loves the boy, and was unwearied in satisfying his wishes.

Frau von Goethe and Fräulein Ulrica now came in, and with them, young Goethe, in his uniform and sword, ready for court. We sat down to table. Fräulein Ulrica and Zelter were very gay, and rallied each other in the pleasantest way during the whole of dinner. The person and presence of Zelter had an agreeable effect on me. As a healthy, happy man, he could give himself up wholly to the

influence of the moment, and always had the word fit for the occasion. Then he was very lively and kindly, and so perfectly unconstrained, that he could speak out whatever was in his mind, sometimes giving a hard hit. He imparted to others his own freedom of spirit, so that all narrowing views were soon dispelled by his presence. I silently thought how much I should like to live with him a while, and I am sure it would do me good.

Zelter went away soon after dinner. He was invited to visit the grand-duchess that evening.

Thurs., Dec. 4.—This morning, Secretary Kräuter brought me an invitation to dine with Goethe; at the same time, by Goethe's desire, giving me a hint to present Zelter with a copy of my "*Beiträge zur Poesie*." I took the copy to him at his hotel. Zelter, in return, put Immermann's poems into my hands. "I would willingly make you present of this copy," said he, "but, you see, the author has dedicated it to me, and I must therefore keep it as a valuable memorial."

Before dinner, I walked with Zelter through the park towards Upper Weimar. Many spots recalled to him former days, and he told me much of Schiller, Wieland, and Herder, with whom he had been on terms of great intimacy, which he considered had been one of the great benefits of his life.

He then talked much of musical composition, and recited many of Goethe's songs. "If I am to compose music for a poem," said he, "I first try to penetrate into the meaning of the words, and to bring before me a living picture of the situation. I then read it aloud till I know it by heart, and thus, when I again recite it, the melody comes of its own accord."

Wind and rain obliged us to return sooner than we wished. I accompanied him to Goethe's house, where he went up to Frau von Goethe to sing with her before dinner.

About two, I returned there to dinner, and found Goethe and Zelter already engaged in looking at engravings of Italian scenery. Frau von Goethe came in, and we sat down to dinner. Fräulein Ulrica was absent to-day; and so was young Goethe, who just came in to say Good-day and then returned to court.

The conversation at table was especially varied. Many very original anecdotes were told both by Zelter and Goethe, all illustrating the peculiarities of their common friend, Friedrich August Wolf, of Berlin. There was a great deal of talk about the "Nibelungen," and then about Lord Byron and his hoped-for visit to Weimar, in which Frau von Goethe took especial interest. The Rochus festival at Bingen was also a very cheerful subject; and Zelter particularly remembered two beautiful girls, whose amiability had made a deep impression upon him, and the memory of whom seemed still to exhilarate him. Goethe's social song, "Kriegsglück" (Fortune of War), was then gaily talked over. Zelter was inexhaustible in his anecdotes of wounded soldiers and beautiful women, and they all tended to show the truthfulness of the poem. Goethe himself said that he had had no need to go so far for such realities; he had seen them all at Weimar. Frau von Goethe maintained a lively opposition, saying that she would not admit women were so bad as that "nasty" poem represented them.

Thus the time at table passed pleasantly enough.

When, afterwards, I was alone with Goethe, he asked me about Zelter. "Well," said he, "how do you like him?" I described the good effect produced on me by his presence. "On a first acquaintance," said Goethe, "he may appear somewhat blunt, even rough; but that is only external. I scarcely know any man who is really so tender as Zelter. Besides, we must not forget that he has passed more than half a century in Berlin, where, as I remark generally, there is such an audacious set of men, that one cannot get on well with delicacy, but must have one's eyes wide open, and be a little rough now and then, only to keep one's head above water."

(Sup.*) *Fri., Dec. 5.*—I brought Goethe some minerals; amongst them was a piece of clayey ochre, found by Deschamps in Cormayan, which Herr Massot praises very highly. How astonished was Goethe, when he recognised, in this colour, the very same which Angelica Kauffmann used to employ for the fleshy parts of her pictures. "She valued the little that she possessed," said he, "at its weight in gold. However, the place whence it came, and where it is to be found, was unknown to her." Goethe said to his

daughter-in-law that I treated her like a mother, to whom new presents were brought every day. "But do you much more like a child," said Frau von Goethe, at which he could not help smiling.

(Sup.*.) *Sund., Dec. 7.*—I had Goethe how he felt no day. "Not quite so bad as Napoleon on his island," was the answer he not good, with a smile.

The long prostration of his feelings, however, gradually produced an effect upon him.

(Sup.*.) *Sund., Dec. 11.*—Goethe began to have a more brilliant today. "We have reached the storm today," said the hope that, with each successive week, we shall have considerable increase in the days, appears to have exerted a favourable effect on his spirit. "To-day we celebrate the regeneration of the sun!" exclaimed he, joyfully, and I entered his room this morning. The earliest festival comes every year, to pass the weeks before the sun is today was most miserably frayed of mind, to which the sun, in fact.

From now Goethe entered to enter his room, as he was on the point of travelling to Bonn, in order to meet her mother, who was just returning.

When Frau von Goethe was gone, Goethe joined me in the lively conversation which characterises his youth, and am too old," said he, "to understand her, and we could not comprehend that the joy of seeing her to them again, for the first time, would be the same whether long or time. This winter journey is much trouble about nothing, and such a nothing is often of infinite importance to the minds of youth; and in the long run, what difference does it make! One must often undertake some folly, to be able to live on again a little. In my youth I did a better, and still I have escaped with a tolerably whole skin."

(Sup.*.) *Tues., Dec. 10.*—This evening was spent, as usual, with Goethe in diversified conversation. He told me that he had some intention of including in his work a journey into Switzerland in the year 1797. The conversation then turned upon "Werther," which he had only read once, about ten years after its publication. The same had been the case with his other works. We then talked of translation, when he told me that he found it very difficult to render English poetry in German verse. "When we try to

express a strong English monosyllable by German polysyllables or compounds, all force and effect are lost at once." He said that he had made the translation of his "Rameau" in four weeks, dictating every word.

We then talked about the natural sciences, especially about the narrow-mindedness with which learned men contend amongst themselves for priority. "There is nothing," said Goethe, "through which I have learned to know mankind better, than through my philosophical exertions. It has cost me a great deal, and has been attended with great annoyance, but I nevertheless rejoice that I have gained the experience."

I remarked, that in the sciences, the egotism of men appears to be excited in a peculiar manner; and when this is once called into action, all infirmities of character very soon appear.

"Scientific questions," answered Goethe, "are very often questions of existence. A single discovery may make a man renowned, and lay the foundation of his worldly prosperity. It is for this reason that, in the sciences, there prevails this great severity, this pertinacity, and this jealousy concerning the discovery of another. In the sphere of aesthetics, everything is deemed more venial; the thoughts are, more or less, an innate property of all mankind, with respect to which the only point is the treatment and execution—and, naturally enough, little envy is excited. A single idea may give foundation for a hundred epigrams; and the question is, merely, which poet has been able to embody this idea in the most effective and most beautiful manner.

"But in science the treatment is nothing, and all the effect lies in the discovery. There is here little that is universal and subjective, for the isolated manifestations of the laws of nature lie without us—all sphynx-like, motionless, firm, and dumb. Every new phenomenon that is observed is a discovery—every discovery a property. Now only let a single person meddle with property, and man will soon be at hand with all his passions."

"However," continued Goethe, "in the sciences, that also is looked upon as property which has been handed down or taught at the universities. And if any one

advances anything new which contradicts, perhaps threatens to overturn, the creed which we have for years repeated, and have handed down to others, all passions are raised against him, and every effort is made to crush him. People resist with all their might; they act as if they neither heard nor could comprehend; they speak of the new view with contempt, as if it were not worth the trouble of even so much as an investigation or a regard, and thus a new truth may wait a long time before it can make its way. A Frenchman said to a friend of mine, concerning my theory of colours, 'We have worked for fifty years to establish and strengthen the kingdom of Newton, and it will require fifty years more to overthrow it.' The body of mathematicians has endeavoured to make my name so suspected in science that people are afraid of even mentioning it. Some time ago, a pamphlet fell into my hands, in which subjects connected with the theory of colours were treated: the author appeared quite imbued with my theory, and had deduced everything from the same fundamental principles. I read the publication with great delight, but, to my no small surprise, found that the author did not once mention my name. The enigma was afterwards solved. A mutual friend called on me, and confessed to me that the clever young author had wished to establish his reputation by the pamphlet, and had justly feared to compromise himself with the learned world, if he ventured to support by my name the views he was expounding. The little pamphlet was successful, and the ingenious young author has since introduced himself to me personally, and made his excuses."

"This circumstance appears to me the more remarkable," said I, "because in everything else people have reason to be proud of you as an authority, and every one esteems himself fortunate who has the powerful protection of your public countenance. With respect to your theory of colours the misfortune appears to be, that you have to deal not only with the renowned and universally acknowledged Newton, but also with his disciples, who are spread all over the world, who adhere to their master, and whose name is legion. Even supposing that you carry your point at last, you will certainly for a long space of time stand alone with your new theory."

"I am accustomed to it, and prepared for it," returned Goethe. "But say yourself," continued he, "have I not had sufficient reason to feel proud, when for twenty years I have been forced to own to myself that the great Newton, and all mathematicians and august calculators with him, have fallen into a decided error respecting the theory of colours; and that I, amongst millions, am the only one who knows the truth on this important subject? With this feeling of superiority, it was possible for me to bear with the stupid pretensions of my opponents. People endeavoured to attack me and my theory in every way, and to render my ideas ridiculous; but, nevertheless, I rejoiced exceedingly over my completed work. All the attacks of my adversaries only serve to expose to me the weakness of mankind."

While Goethe spoke thus, with such a force and a fluency of expression as I have not the power to reproduce with perfect truth, his eyes sparkled with unusual fire; an expression of triumph was observable in them; whilst an ironical smile played upon his lips. The features of his fine countenance were more imposing than ever.

(Sup.) *Wed., Dec. 31.*—Dined at Goethe's; conversing on various subjects. He showed me a portfolio containing sketches; amongst which the first attempts of Henry Füssli* were especially remarkable.

We then spoke upon religious subjects, and the abuse of the divine name. "People treat it," said Goethe, "as if that incomprehensible and most high Being, who is even beyond the reach of thought, were only their equal. Otherwise, they would not say the *Lord God*, the *dear God*,† the *good God*. This expression becomes to them, especially to the clergy, who have it daily in their mouths, a mere phrase, a barren name, to which no thought is attached whatever. If they were impressed by His greatness they would be dumb, and through veneration unwilling to name Him."

* That is, Füssli, as we call him. *Taus.*

† "This *dear God*" (*der liebe Gott*) is one of the commonest German expressions. *Taus.*

1824.

(Sup.) *Fri., Jan. 2.*—Dined at Goethe's, and some cheerful conversation. Mention was made of a beauty belonging to the Weimar society, when guests remarked that he was on the point of falling with her, although her understanding could not be called brilliant.

"Pshaw," said Goethe, laughing, "as if love had anything to do with the understanding. The things we love in a young lady are something very different from understanding. We love in her beauty, youthfulness, trustfulness, her character, her faults, her faults, and God knows what '*je ne sais quoi*' besides; but we do not love her understanding. We respect her understanding when it is brilliant, and by it the worth of a girl is infinitely enhanced in our eyes. Understanding is to serve to fix our affections when we already love; understanding is not that which is capable of exciting hearts, and awakening a passion."

We found much that was true and convincing in his words, and were very willing to consider the matter in that light. After dinner, and when the rest of the party had departed, I remained sitting with Goethe, and conversed with him on various interesting topics.

We discoursed upon English literature, on the merits of Shakspeare; and on the unfavourable position of all English dramatic authors who had appeared since the poetical giant.

"A dramatic talent of any importance," said he, "could not forbear to notice Shakspeare's works, and could not forbear to study them. Having studied them, we be aware that Shakspeare has already exhausted all the depths of human nature in all its tendencies, in all its depths, and that, in fact, there remains for him, in this corner, nothing more to do. And how could we have the courage only to put pen to paper, if one were not with an earnest appreciating spirit, that such unfathomable and unattainable excellences were already in existence?"

"It fared better with me fifty years ago in my

Germany. I could soon come to an end with all that then existed; it could not long awe me, or occupy my attention. I soon left behind me German literature, and the study of it, and turned my thoughts to life and to production. So on and on I went in my own natural development, and on and on I fashioned the productions of epoch after epoch. And at every step of life and development, my standard of excellence was not much higher than what at such step I was able to attain. But had I been born an Englishman, and had all those numerous masterpieces been brought before me in all their power, at my first dawn of youthful consciousness, they would have overpowered me, and I should not have known what to do. I could not have gone on with such fresh light-heartedness, but should have had to bethink myself, and look about for a long time, to find some new outlet."

I turned the conversation back to Shakspeare. "When one, to some degree, disengages him from English literature," said I, "and considers him transformed into a German, one cannot fail to look upon his gigantic greatness as a miracle. But if one seeks him in his home, transplants oneself to the soil of his country, and to the atmosphere of the century in which he lived; further, if one studies his contemporaries, and his immediate successors, and inhales the force wafted to us from Ben Jonson, Massinger, Marlow, and Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakspeare still, indeed, appears a being of the most exalted magnitude; but still, one arrives at the conviction that many of the wonders of his genius are, in some measure, accessible, and that much is due to the powerfully productive atmosphere of his age and time."

"You are perfectly right," returned Goethe. "It is with Shakspeare as with the mountains of Switzerland. Transplant Mont Blanc at once into the large plain of Lüneburg Heath, and we should find no words to express our wonder at its magnitude. Seek it, however, in its gigantic home, go to it over its immense neighbours, the Jungfrau, the Finsteraarhorn, the Eiger, the Wetterhorn, St. Gothard, and Monte Rosa; Mont Blanc will, indeed, still remain a giant, but it will no longer produce in us such amazement."

"Besides, let him who will not believe," continued Goethe.

"that much of Shakespeare's greatness aspertains to his great virgin time, only ask himself the question, whether a phenomenon so extraordinary would be possible in the present England of 1824, in those evil days of entangling and dispiriting journalism."

"That undisturbed, honest, uncommercial literary production by which alone anything great can thrive, is no longer possible. Our talent, not present before the public. The daily criticism which appears in fifty different places, and the insinuation that is caused by them amongst the public, prevent the appearance of any second production. In the present day, he who does not keep aloof from all this, isolates himself by much force, is lost. Through the unceasingly negative, methodical and critical tone of the journal a sort of half culture finds its way into the nation; but its productive talent is a noxious mist, a dropping poison which destroys the tree of creative power, tears the ornamental green leaves, to the deepest path and the most hidden fibres."

"And then how time and work has life itself become during the last two shabby centuries. Where do we no meet any original nature? and where is the man who has the strength to be true, and to follow his own heart? This however, affects the poet, who must find all within himself while he is left in the lurch by all without."

The conversation now turned on "Werther." "That said Goethe, "is a creation which I, like the pelican, fed with the blood of my own heart. It contains so much from the innermost recesses of my breast, so much feeling and thought, that it might easily be spread into a novel of five such volumes. Besides, as I have often said, I have on read the book once since its appearance, and have taken good care not to read it again. It is a mass of congreved rockets. I am uncomfortable when I look at it; and dread lest I should once more experience the peculiar mental state from which it was produced."

I reminded him of his conversation with Napoleon, which I knew by the sketch amongst his unpublished papers which I had repeatedly urged him to give me in detail. "Napoleon," said I, "pointed out to you a passage 'Werther,' which, if appeared to him, would not stand

strict examination; and this you allowed. I should much like to know what passage he meant."

"Guess!" said Goethe, with a mysterious smile.

"Now," said I, "I almost think it is where Charlotte sends the pistols to Werther, without saying a word to Albert, and without imparting to him her misgivings and apprehensions. You have given yourself great trouble to find a motive for this silence, but it does not appear to hold good against the urgent necessity where the life of the friend was at stake."

"Your remark," returned Goethe, "is really not bad; but I do not think it right to reveal whether Napoleon meant this passage or another. However, be that as it may, your observation is quite as correct as his."

I asked the question, whether the great effect produced by the appearance of "Werther" was really to be attributed to the period. "I cannot," said I, "reconcile to myself this view, though it is so extensively spread. 'Werther' made an epoch because it appeared—not because it appeared at a certain time. There is in every period so much unexpressed sorrow—so much secret discontent and disgust for life, and, in single individuals, there are so many disagreements with the world—so many conflicts between their natures and civil regulations, that 'Werther' would make an epoch even if it appeared to-day for the first time."

"You are quite right," said Goethe; "it is on that account that the book to this day influences youth of a certain age, as it did formerly. It was scarcely necessary for me to deduce my own youthful dejection from the general influence of my time, and from the reading of a few French authors. Rather was it owing to individual and immediate circumstances which touched me to the quick, and gave me a great deal of trouble, and indeed brought me into that frame of mind which produced 'Werther.' I had lived, loved, and suffered much—that was it."

"On considering more closely the much-talked-of 'Werther' period, we discover that it does not belong to the course of universal culture, but to the career of life in every individual, who, with an innate free natural instinct, must accommodate himself to the narrow limits of an antiquated world. Obstructed fortune, restrained activity, unfulfilled wishes,

are not the calamities of any particular time, but those of every individual man; and it would be bad, indeed, if every one had not, once in his life, known a time when 'Werther' seemed as if it had been written for him alone."

(Sup.) *Sun., Jan. 4.*—To-day, after dinner, Goethe went through a portfolio, containing some works of Raphael, with me. He often busies himself with Raphael, in order to keep up a constant intercourse with that which is best, and to accustom himself to muse upon the thoughts of a great man. At the same time, it gives him pleasure to introduce me to such things.

We afterwards spoke about the "Divan" *—especially about the "book of ill-humour," in which much is poured forth that he carried in his heart against his enemies.

"I have, however," continued he, "been very moderate: if I had uttered all that vexed me or gave me trouble, the few pages would soon have swelled to a volume.

"People were never thoroughly contented with me, but always wished me otherwise than it has pleased God to make me. They were also seldom contented with my productions. When I had long exerted my whole soul to favour the world with a new work, it still desired that I should thank it into the bargain for considering the work endurable. If any one praised me, I was not allowed, in self-congratulation, to receive it as a well-merited tribute; but people expected from me some modest expression, humbly setting forth the total unworthiness of my person and my work. However, my nature opposed this; and I should have been a miserable hypocrite, if I had so tried to lie and dissemble. Since I was strong enough to show myself in my whole truth, just as I felt, I was deemed proud, and am considered so to the present day.

"In religious, scientific, and political matters, I generally brought trouble upon myself, because I was no hypocrite, and had the courage to express what I felt.

"I believed in God and in Nature, and in the triumph of good over evil; but this was not enough for pious souls: I

* Goethe's "West-östliche (west-eastern) Divan," one of the twelve divisions of which is entitled "Das Buch des Unmuths" (The Book of Ill-Humour).—*Trans.*

was also required to believe other points, which were opposed to the feeling of my soul for truth; besides, I did not see that these would be of the slightest service to me.

"It was also prejudicial to me that I discovered Newton's theory of light and colour to be an error, and that I had the courage to contradict the universal creed. I discovered light in its purity and truth, and I considered it my duty to fight for it. The opposite party, however, did their utmost to darken the light; for they maintained that *shade is a part of light*. It sounds absurd when I express it; but so it is: for they said that *colours*, which are shadow and the result of shade, *are light itself*, or, which amounts to the same thing, *are the beams of light, broken now in one way, now in another*."

Goethe was silent, whilst an ironical smile spread over his expressive countenance. He continued:—

"And now for political matters. What trouble I have taken, and what I have suffered, on that account, I cannot tell you. Do you know my 'Aufgeregten'?"*

"Yesterday, for the first time," returned I, "I read the piece, in consequence of the new edition of your works; and I regret from my heart that it remains unfinished. But, even as it is, every right-thinking person must coincide with your sentiments."

"I wrote it at the time of the French Revolution," continued Goethe, "and it may be regarded, in some measure, as my political confession of faith at that time. I have taken the countess as a type of the nobility; and, with the words which I put into her mouth, I have expressed how the nobility really ought to think. The countess has just returned from Paris; she has there been an eye-witness of the revolutionary events, and has drawn, therefore, for herself, no bad doctrine. She has convinced herself that the people may be ruled, but not oppressed, and that the revolutionary outbreaks of the lower classes are the consequence of the injustice of the higher classes. 'I will for the future,' says she, 'strenuously avoid every action that appears to me unjust, and will, both in society and at court,

* "Die Aufgeregten" (the Agitated, in a political sense) is an unfinished drama by Goethe.—*Trans.*

loudly express my opinion concerning such actions in others. In no case of injustice will I be silent, even though I should be cried down as a democrat.'

"I should have thought this sentiment perfectly respectable," continued Goethe; "it was mine at that time, and it is so still; but as a reward for it, I was endowed with all sorts of titles, which I do not care to repeat."

"One need only read 'Egmont,'" answered I, "to discover what you think. I know no German piece in which the freedom of the people is more advocated than in this."

"Sometimes," said Goethe, "people do not like to look on me as I am, but turn their glances from everything which could show me in my true light. Schiller, on the contrary—who, between ourselves, was much more of an aristocrat than I am, but who considered what he said more than I—had the wonderful fortune to be looked upon as a particular friend of the people. I give it up to him with all my heart, and console myself with the thought that others before me have fared no better."

"It is true that I could be no friend to the French Revolution; for its horrors were too near me, and shocked me daily and hourly, whilst its beneficial results were not then to be discovered. Neither could I be indifferent to the fact that the Germans were endeavouring, artificially, to bring about such scenes here, as were, in France, the consequence of a great necessity."

"But I was as little a friend to arbitrary rule. Indeed, I was perfectly convinced that a great revolution is never a fault of the people, but of the government. Revolutions are utterly impossible as long as governments are constantly just and constantly vigilant, so that they may anticipate them by improvements at the right time, and not hold out until they are forced to yield by the pressure from beneath."

"Because I hated the Revolution, the name of the '*Friend of the powers that be*' was bestowed upon me. That is, however, a very ambiguous title, which I would beg to decline. If the '*powers that be*' were all that is excellent, good, and just, I should have no objection to the title; but, since with much that is good there is also much that is bad,

unjust, and imperfect, a friend of the 'powers that be' means often little less than the friend of the obsolete and bad.*

"But time is constantly progressing, and human affairs wear every fifty years a different aspect; so that an arrangement which, in the year 1800, was perfection, may, perhaps, in the year 1850 be a defect.

"And, furthermore, nothing is good for a nation but that which arises from its own core and its own general wants, without a pish imitation of another; since what to one race of people, of a certain age, is a wholesome nutriment, may perhaps prove a poison for another. All endeavours to introduce any foreign innovation, the necessity for which is not rooted in the core of the nation itself, are therefore foolish; and all premeditated revolutions of the kind are unsuccessful, *for they are without God, who keeps aloof from such bungling.* If, however, there exists an actual necessity for a great reform amongst a people, God is with it, and it prospers. He was visibly with Christ and his first adherents; for the appearance of the new doctrine of love was a necessity to the people. He was also visibly with Luther; for the purification of the doctrine corrupted by the priests was no less a necessity. Neither of the great powers whom I have named was, however, a friend of the permanent; much more were both of them convinced that the old heaven must be got rid of, and that it would be impossible to go on and remain in the untrue, unjust, and defective way."

Thurs., Jan. 27. Goethe talked with me about the continuation of his memoirs, with which he is now busy. He observed that this later period of his life would not be narrated with such minuteness as the youthful epoch of "Dichtung und Wahrheit."† "I must," said he, "treat this later period more in the fashion of annals: my outward actions must appear rather than my inward life.

* The German phrase "Freund des Bestehenden," which, for want of a better expression, has been rendered above "friend of the powers that be," literally means "friend of the permanent," and was used by the detractors of Goethe to denote the "enemy of the progressive."

—*Trans.*

† "Poetry and Truth," the title of Goethe's autobiography.—*Trans.*

still obliged to be silent as to the opinion of others, that I may not give offence. This would be but poor sport, if by this means I had not the advantage of learning the thoughts of others without their being able to learn mine."

Sun., Feb. 15.—Goethe invited me to take a walk before dinner to-day. I found him at breakfast when I entered the room: he seemed in excellent spirits.

"I have had a pleasant visit," said he cheerfully. "A promising young Westphalian, named Meyer, has just been with me. He has written poems which warrant high expectations. He is only eighteen, and has made incredible progress.

"I am glad," continued he, smiling, "that I am not eighteen now. When I was eighteen, Germany was in its teens also, and something could be done; but now an incredible deal is demanded, and every avenue is barred.

"Germany itself stands so high in every department, that we can scarcely survey all it has done; and now we must be Greeks and Latins, and English and French into the bargain. Not content with this, some have the madness of pointing to the East also; and surely this is enough to confuse a young man's head!

"I have, by way of consolation, shown him my colossal Juno, as a token that he had best stick to the Greeks, and find consolation there. He is a fine young man, and, if he takes care not to dissipate his energies, something will be made of him. However, as I said before, I thank Heaven that I am not young in so thoroughly finished a time. I could not stay here. Nay, if I sought refuge in America, I should come too late, for there is now too much light even there."

Sun., Feb. 22.—Dined with Goethe and his son. The latter related some pleasant stories of the time when he was a student at Heidelberg. He had often been with his friends on an excursion along the Rhine, in his vacations, and especially cherished the remembrance of a landlord, at whose house he and ten other students had once passed the night, and who provided them with wine gratis, merely that he might share the pleasures of a "Commerz."*

* The academical word for a student's drinking party.—*Trans.*

After dinner, Goethe showed us some coloured drawings of Italian scenery, especially that of Northern Italy, with the adjoining Swiss mountains, and the Lago Maggiore. The Borromean Isles were reflected in the water; near the shore were skiffs and fishing-tackle, which led Goethe to remark that this was the lake in the "Wanderjahre." On the north-west, towards Monte Rosa, stood the hills bordering the lake in black-blue heavy masses, as we are wont to see them soon after sunset.

I remarked that, to me, who had been born in the plains, the gloomy sublimity of these masses produced an uncomfortable feeling, and that I, by no means, desired to explore such wild recesses.

"That feeling is natural," said Goethe. "Really that state is alone suitable to man, in which, and for which, he was born. He who is not led abroad by great objects is far happier at home. Switzerland, at first, made so great an impression upon me, that it disturbed and confused me. Only after repeated visits—only in after years, when I visited those mountains merely as a mineralogist—could I feel at my ease among them."

We looked, afterwards, at a long series of copper-plates, from pictures by modern artists, in one of the French galleries. The invention displayed in these pictures was almost uniformly weak, and among forty we barely found four or five good ones. These were a girl dictating a love-letter; a woman in a house to let, which nobody will take! "catching fish;" and musicians before an image of the Madonna. A landscape, in Poussin's manner, was not bad; on looking at this, Goethe said, "Such artists get a general idea of Poussin's landscapes, and work upon that. We cannot style their pictures good or bad: they are not bad, because, through every part, you catch glimpses of an excellent model. But you cannot call them good, because the artists usually want the great personal peculiarity of Poussin. It is just so among poets, and there are some who, for instance, would make a very poor figure in Shakespeare's grand style."

We ended by examining, and talking over for a long while, Rauch's model of Goethe's statue, which is designed for Frankfort.

Tues., Feb. 24.—I went to Goethe's at one o'clock to-day. He showed me some manuscripts, which he had dictated for the first number of the fifth volume of "Kunst und Alterthum." I found that he had written an appendix to my critique of the German "Paria," in reference both to the French tragedy and to his own lyrical trilogy, by which this subject was, to a certain extent, completed. "You were quite right," said he, "to avail yourself of the occasion of your critique, to become acquainted with Indian matters, since, in the end, we retain from our studies only that which we practically apply."

I agreed with him, and said that I had made this experience at the university, since, of all that was said in the lectures, I had only retained that, of which I could, through the tendency of my nature, make a practical application; on the contrary, I had completely forgotten all that I had been unable to reduce to practice. "I have," said I, "heard Heeren's lectures on ancient and modern history, and know now nothing about the matter. But if I studied a period of history for the sake of treating it dramatically, what I learned would be safely secured to me for ever."

"Altogether," said Goethe, "they teach in academies far too many things, and far too much that is useless. Then the individual professors extend their department too much

far beyond the wants of their hearers. In former days lectures were read in chemistry and botany as belonging to medicine, and the physician could manage them. Now, both these have become so extensive, that each of them requires a life; yet acquaintance with both is expected from the physician. Nothing can come of this; one thing must be neglected and forgotten for the sake of the other. He who is wise puts aside all claims which may dissipate his attention, confines himself to one branch, and excels in that."

Goethe then showed me a short critique, which he had written on Byron's "Chin," and which I read with great interest.

"We see," he said, "how the inadequate dogmas of the church work upon a free mind like Byron's, and how by such a piece he struggles to get rid of a doctrine which has been forced upon him. The English clergy will not think

my Romish elegies were put into the measure and style of Byron's 'Don Juan,' the whole would be found infamous."

The French newspapers were brought. The campaign of the French in Spain under the Duke d'Angoulême, which was just ended, had great interest for Goethe. "I must praise the Bourbons for this measure," said he; "they had not really gained the throne till they had gained the army, and that is now accomplished. The soldier returns with loyalty to his king; for he has, from his own victories, and the discomfitures of the many-headed Spanish host, learned the difference between obeying one and many. The army has sustained its ancient fame, and shown that it is brave in itself, and can conquer without Napoleon."

Goethe then turned his thoughts backward into history, and talked much of the Prussian army in the Seven Years' War, which, accustomed by Frederic the Great to constant victory, grew careless, so that, in after days, it lost many battles from over-confidence. All the minutest details were present to his mind, and I had reason to admire his excellent memory.

"I had the great advantage," said he, "of being born at a time when the greatest events which agitated the world occurred, and such have continued to occur during my long life; so that I am a living witness of the Seven Years' War, of the separation of America from England, of the French Revolution, and of the whole Napoleon era, with the downfall of that hero, and the events which followed. Thus I have attained results and insight impossible to those who are born now and must learn all these things from books which they will not understand.

"What the next years will bring I cannot predict; but I fear we shall not soon have repose. It is not given to the world to be contented; the great are not such that there will be no abuse of power; the masses not such that, in hope of gradual improvement, they will be contented with a moderate condition. Could we perfect human nature, we might also expect a perfect state of things; but, as it is, there will always be a wavering hither and thither; one part must suffer while the other is at ease, envy and egotism will be always at work like bad demons, and party strife will be without end.

"The most reasonable way is for every one to follow his own vocation to which he has been born, and which he has learned, and to avoid hindering others from following theirs. Let the shoemaker abide by his last, the peasant by his plough, and let the king know how to govern; for this is also a business which must be learned, and with which no one should meddle who does not understand it."

Returning to the French papers, Goethe said,—"The liberals may speak, for when they are reasonable we like to hear them; but with the royalists, who have the executive power in their hands, talking comes amiss—they should act. They may march troops, and behead and hang—that is all right; but attacking opinions, and justifying their measures in public prints, does not become them. If there were a public of kings, they might talk."

"For myself," he continued, "I have always been a royalist. I have let others babble, and have done as I saw fit. I understood my course, and knew my own object. If I committed a fault as a single individual, I could make it good again; but if I committed it jointly with three or four others, it would be impossible to make it good, for among many there are many opinions."

Goethe was in excellent spirits to-day. He showed me Frau von Spiegel's album, in which he had written some very beautiful verses. A place had been left open for him for two years, and he rejoiced at having been able to perform at last an old promise. After I had read the "Poem to Frau von Spiegel," I turned over the leaves of the book, in which I found many distinguished names. On the very next page was a poem by Tiedge, written in the very spirit and style of his "Urania." "In a saucy mood," said Goethe, "I was on the point of writing some verses beneath those; but I am glad I did not. It would not have been the first time that, by rash expressions, I had repelled good people, and spoiled the effect of my best works."

"However," continued Goethe, "I have had to endure not a little from Tiedge's 'Urania;' for, at one time, nothing was sung and nothing was declaimed but this same 'Urania.' Wherever you went, you found 'Urania' on the table. 'Urania' and immortality were the topics of every conversation. I would by no means dispense with the

warning that, if he would not play the part, I would play it myself. That did the business; for they knew me at the theatre well enough, and were aware that I did not understand jesting in such matters, and also that I was mad enough to keep my word in any case."

"And would you really have played the part?" asked I.

"Yes," said Goethe, "I would have played it, and would have eclipsed Herr Becker, too, for I knew the part better than he did."

We then opened the portfolios, and proceeded to the examination of the drawings and engravings. Goethe, in such matters, takes great pains on my account, and I see that it is his intention to give me a higher degree of penetration in the observation of works of art. He shows me only what is perfect in its kind, and endeavours to make me apprehend the intention and merit of the artist, that I may learn to pursue the thoughts of the best, and feel like the best. "This," said he, "is the way to cultivate what we call taste. Taste is only to be educated by contemplation, not of the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I, therefore, show you only the best works; and when you are grounded in these, you will have a standard for the rest, which you will know how to value, without overrating them. And I show you the best in each class, that you may perceive that no class is to be despised, but that each gives delight when a man of genius attains its highest point. For instance, this piece, by a French artist, is *galant*, to a degree which you see nowhere else, and is therefore a model in its way."

Goethe handed me the engraving, and I looked at it with delight. There was a beautiful room in a summer residence, with open doors and windows looking into a garden, where one might see the most graceful figures. A handsome lady, aged about thirty, was sitting with a music book, from which she seemed to have just sung. Sitting by her, a little further back, was a young girl of about fifteen. At the open window behind stood another young lady, holding a lute, which she seemed still to be sounding. At this moment a young gentleman was entering, to whom the eyes of the ladies were directed. He seemed to have interrupted the music; and his slight bow gave the notion

that he was making an apology, which the ladies were gratified to hear.

"That, I think," said Goethe, "is as *galant* as any piece of Calderon's; and you have now seen the very best thing of this kind. But what say you to this?"

With these words he handed me some etchings by Roos, the famous painter of animals; they were all of sheep, in every posture and situation. The simplicity of their countenances, the ugliness and shagginess of the fleece—all was represented with the utmost fidelity, as if it were nature itself.

"I always feel uneasy," said Goethe, "when I look at these beasts. Their state, so limited, dull, gaping, and dreaming, excites in me such sympathy, that I fear I shall become a sheep, and almost think the artist must have been one. At all events, it is most wonderful how Roos has been able to think and feel himself into the very soul of these creatures, so as to make the internal character peer with such force through the outward covering. Here you see what a great talent can do when it keeps steady to subjects which are congenial with its nature."

"Has not, then," said I, "this artist also painted dogs, cats, and beasts of prey with similar truth; nay, with this great gift of assuming a mental state foreign to himself, have he not been able to delineate human character with equal fidelity?"

"No," said Goethe, "all that lay out of his sphere; but the gentle, grass-eating animals, sheep, goats, cows, and the like, he was never weary of repeating; this was the peculiar province of his talent, which he did not quit during the whole course of his life. And in this he did well. A sympathy with these animals was born with him, a knowledge of their psychological condition was given him, and thus he had so fine an eye for their bodily structure. Other creatures were perhaps not so transparent to him, and therefore he felt neither calling nor impulse to paint them."

By this remark of Goethe's, much that was analogous was revived within me, and was presented in all its liveliness to my mind. Thus he had said to me, not long before, that knowledge of the world is inborn with the genuine poet, and that he needs not much experience or varied observation.

to represent it adequately. "I wrote 'Goetz von Berlichingen,'" said he, "as a young man of two-and-twenty, and was astonished, ten years after, at the truth of my delineation. It is obvious that I had not experienced nor seen anything of the kind, and therefore I must have acquired the knowledge of various human conditions by way of anticipation.

"Generally, I only took pleasure in painting my inward world before I became acquainted with the outer one. But when I found, in actual life, that the world was really just what I had fancied, it vexed me, and I no more felt delight in representing it. Indeed, I may say that if I had waited till I knew the world before I represented it, my representation would have had the appearance of persiflage.

"There is in every character," said he, another time, "a certain necessity, a sequence, which, together with this or that leading feature, causes secondary features. Observation teaches this sufficiently; but with some persons this knowledge may be innate. Whether with me experience and innate faculty are united, I will not inquire; but this I know, if I have talked with any man a quarter of an hour, I will let him talk two hours."

Goethe had likewise said of Lord Byron, that the world to him was transparent, and that he could paint by way of anticipation. I expressed some doubts whether Byron would succeed in painting, for instance, a subordinate animal nature, for his individuality seemed to me to be too powerful for him to give himself up, with any degree of predilection, to such a subject. Goethe admitted this, and replied that the anticipation only went so far as the objects were analogous to the talent; and we agreed, that in the same proportion as the anticipation is confined or extended, is the representing talent of greater or smaller compass.

"If your excellency," said I, "maintains that the world is inborn with the poet, you of course mean only the interior world, not the empirical world of appearances and conventions; if the poet is to give a successful representation of this also, an investigation into the actual will surely be requisite."

"Certainly," replied Goethe, "so it is; the region of love, hate, hope, despair, or by whatever other names you may

call the moods and passions of the soul, is innate with the poet, and he succeeds in representing it. But it is not born with him to know by instinct how courts are held, or how a parliament or a coronation is managed; and if he will not offend against truth, while treating such subjects, he must have recourse to experience or tradition. Thus, in 'Faust,' I could, by anticipation, know how to describe my hero's gloomy weariness of life, and the emotions which love excites in the heart of Gretchen; but the lines,

*Wie traurig steigt die unvollkommne Scheibe
Des späten Monds mit feuchter Glut heran!*

'How gloomy does the imperfect disc
Of the late moon with humid glow arise!'

required some observation of nature."

"Yet," said I, "every line of 'Faust' bears marks, not to be mistaken, of a careful study of life and the world; nor does one for a moment suppose otherwise than that the whole is only the result of the amplest experience."

"Perhaps so," replied Goethe; "yet, had I not the world already in my soul through anticipation, I should have remained blind with seeing eyes, and all experience and observation would have been dead, unproductive labour. The light is there, and the colours surround us; but, if we had no light and no colours in our own eyes, we should not perceive the outward phenomena."

Sat., Feb. 28.—"There are," said Goethe, "excellent men, who are unable to do anything impromptu, or superficially, but whose nature demands that they should quietly and deeply penetrate into every subject they may take in hand. Such minds often make us impatient, for we seldom get from them what we want at the moment; but in this way alone the noblest tasks are accomplished."

I turned the conversation to Ramberg. "He," said Goethe, "is an artist of quite a different stamp, of a most genial talent, and indeed unequalled in his power of impromptu. At Dresden, he once asked me to give him a subject. I gave him Agamemnon, at the moment when, on his return from Troy, he is descending from his chariot, and is seized with a gloomy feeling, on touching the threshold of his house. You will agree that this is a subject of a most

difficult kind, and, with another artist, would have demanded the most mature deliberation. But the words had scarcely passed my lips, before Ramberg began to draw, and, indeed, I was struck with admiration, to see how correctly he at once apprehended his subject. I cannot deny that I should like to possess some drawings by Ramberg."

We talked then of other artists, who set to work in a superficial way, and thus degenerated into mannerism.

"Mannerism," said Goethe, "is always longing to have done, and has no true enjoyment in work. A genuine, really great talent, on the other hand, finds its greatest happiness in execution. Ross is unwearied in drawing the hair and wool of his goats and sheep, and you see by his infinite details that he enjoyed the purest felicity in doing his work, and had no wish to bring it to an end.

"Inferior talents do not enjoy art for its own sake; while at work they have nothing before their eyes but the profit they hope to make when they have done. With such worldly views and tendencies, nothing great was ever yet produced."

Sund., Feb. 29. At twelve o'clock, I went to Goethe, who had invited me to take a walk before dinner. I found him at breakfast when I entered, and taking my seat opposite to him, turned the conversation upon those productions which occupy us both on account of the new edition of his works. I counselled him to insert both his "Gods, Heroes, and Wieland," and his "Letters of a Pastor," in his new edition.

"I cannot," said Goethe, "from my present point of view, properly judge the merit of those youthful productions. You younger people may decide, if you will. Yet I will not find fault with those beginnings; I was, indeed, then in the dark, and struggled on, unconscious of what I was seeking so earnestly, but I had a feeling of the right, a divining rod, that showed me where gold was to be found."

I observed that this must be the case with all great talents, since otherwise, on awaking in a mixed world, they would not seize upon the right and shun the wrong.

The horses had, in the mean while, been put to, and we rode towards Jena. We conversed on different subjects, and Goethe mentioned the last French newspapers. "The

a spacious meadow, through which, at about the distance of a bow-shot, the Ilm winds silently along. On the opposite side of the river, the bank rises like a hill; on the summit and sides of which spreads the broad park, with the mixed foliage of alders, ash-trees, poplars, and birches, bounding the horizon at an agreeable distance on the south and west.

This view of the park over the meadow gives a feeling, especially in summer, as if one were near a wood which extended leagues round about. One thinks that every moment there will be deer bounding out upon the meadows. One feels transplanted into the peace of the deepest natural solitude, for the silence is often uninterrupted, except by the solitary notes of the blackbird, or the frequently-suspended song of the wood-thrush.

Out of this dream of profound solitude, we are, however, awakened by the striking of the tower-clock, the screaming of the peacocks from the park, or the drums and horns of the military from the barracks. And this is not unpleasant; for such tones comfortably remind one of the neighbourhood of the friendly city, from which one has fancied oneself distant so many miles.

At certain seasons, these meadows are the reverse of lonely. One sees sometimes country people going to Weimar to market, or to work, and returning thence; sometimes loungers of all sorts walking along the windings of the Ilm, especially in the direction towards Upper Weimar, which is on certain days much visited. The hay-making season also animates the scene very agreeably. In the background, one sees flocks of sheep grazing, and sometimes the stately Swiss cows of the neighbouring farm.

To-day, however, there was no trace of these summer phenomena, which are so refreshing to the senses. On the meadows, some streaks of green were scarcely visible; the trees of the park as yet could boast nothing but brown twigs and buds; yet the note of the finch, with the occasional song of the blackbird and thrush, announced the approach of spring.

The air was pleasant and summerlike; a very mild south-west wind was blowing. Small, isolated thunder-clouds passed along the clear sky; high above might be observed the dispersing cirrus-streaks. We accurately observed the

These rooms were rather cool, and we returned into the open air, which was mild. As we walked up and down the chief pathway, in the noonday sun, our conversation turned on modern literature, Schelling, and some new plays by Count Platen.

We soon returned to the natural objects. The crown-imperials and lilies were already far advanced; the mallows on both sides of the park were already green.

The upper part of the garden, on the declivity of the hill, is covered with grass, and here and there a few fruit-trees. Paths extend along the summit, and then return to the foot; which awakened in me a wish to ascend and look about me. Goethe, as he ascended these paths, walked swiftly before me, and I was rejoiced to see how active he was.

On the hedge above we found a pea-hen, which seemed to have come from the prince's park; and Goethe remarked that, in summer time, he was accustomed to allure the peacocks, by giving them such food as they loved.

Descending on the winding path on the other side of the hill, I found a stone, surrounded by shrubs, on which was carved this line from the well-known poem--

Hier im stillen gedachte der Liebende seiner Geliebten;

"Here in silence reflected the lover upon his beloved;"

and I felt as if I were on classic ground.

Near this was a thicket of half-grown oaks, firs, birches, and beech-trees. Beneath the firs, I found the sign* of a bird of prey. I showed it to Goethe, who said he had often seen such in this place. From this I concluded that these firs were a favourite abode of some owls, which had been frequently seen in this place.

Passing round this thicket, we found ourselves once more on the principal path near the house. The oaks, firs, birches, and beeches, which we had just gone round, being mingled together, here form a semicircle, overarching like a grotto the inner space, in which we sat down on

* The word here rendered by the general expression "sign" is "Gewölle," a sporting term, which signifies the hair, feathers, or other indigestible matter swallowed by a bird of prey and afterwards vomited. *Trans.*

little chairs, placed about a round table. The sun was so powerful, that the shade even of these leafless trees was agreeable. "I know," said Goethe, "no better refuge, in the heats of summer, than this spot. I planted all the trees, forty years ago, with my own hand; I have had the pleasure of watching their growth, and have now for a long time enjoyed their refreshing shade. The foliage of these oaks and beeches is impervious to the most potent sun. In hot summer days, I like to sit here after dinner; and often over the meadows and the whole park such stillness reigns, that the ancients would say, 'Pan sleeps.'"

We now heard the town-clock striking two, and returned to the house.

Tues., Mar. 30.—This evening I was with Goethe. I was alone with him; we talked on various subjects, and drank a bottle of wine. We spoke of the French drama, as contrasted with the German.

"It will be very difficult," said Goethe, "for the German public to come to a kind of right judgment, as they do in Italy and France. We have a special obstacle in the circumstance, that on our stage a medley of all sorts of things is represented. On the same boards where we saw Hamlet yesterday, we see Staberle* to-day; and if to-morrow we are delighted with 'Zauberflöte,' the day after we shall be charmed with the oddities of the next lucky wight. Hence the public becomes confused in its judgment, mingling together various species, which it never learns rightly to appreciate and to understand. Furthermore, every one has his own individual demands and personal wishes, and returns to the spot where he finds them realized. On the tree where he has plucked figs to-day, he would pluck them again to-morrow, and would make a long face if sloes had grown in their stead during the night. If any ~~one~~ is a friend to sloes, he goes to the thorns.

"Schiller had the happy thought of building a house for tragedy alone, and of giving a piece every week for the male sex exclusively. But this notion presupposed a very large city, and could not be realized with our humble means."

* A Viennese buffoon.—*Trans.*

We talked about the plays of Iffland and Kotzebue, which, in their way, Goethe highly commended. "From this very fault," said he, "that people do not perfectly distinguish between *kinds* in art, the pieces of these men are often unjustly censured. We may wait a long time before a couple of such popular talents come again."

I praised Iffland's "Hagestolz" (Old Bachelor), with which I had been highly pleased on the stage. "It is unquestionably Iffland's best piece," said Goethe; "it is the only one in which he goes from prose into the ideal."

He then told me of a piece, which he and Schiller had made as a continuation to the "Hagestolz"; that is to say, in conversation, without writing it down. Goethe told me the progress of the action, scene by scene; it was very pleasant and cheerful, and gave me great delight.

Goethe then spoke of some new plays by Platen. "In these pieces," said he, "we may see the influence of Calderon. They are very clever, and, in a certain sense, complete; but they want specific gravity, a certain weight of import. They are not of a kind to excite in the mind of the reader a deep and abiding interest; on the contrary, the strings of the soul are touched but lightly and transiently. They are like cork, which, when it swims on the water, makes no impression, but is easily sustained by the surface.

"The German requires a certain earnestness, a certain grandeur of thought, and a certain fulness of sentiment. It is on this account that Schiller is so highly esteemed by them all. I do not in the least doubt the abilities of Platen; but these, probably from mistaken views of art, are not manifested here. He shows distinguished culture, intellect, pungent wit, and artistical completeness; but these, especially in Germany, are not enough.

"Generally, the personal character of the writer influences the public rather than his talents as an artist. Napoleon said of Corneille, '*S'il vivait, je le ferais prince*;' yet he never read him. Racine he read, but did not say this of him. Lafontaine, too, is looked upon with a high degree of esteem by the French, not on account of his poetic merits, but of the greatness of character which he manifests in his writings."

the original force and freshness of the poems excite me to a high degree, but Goethe, by his manner of reading them, showed himself to me on a side hitherto unknown, but highly important. What variety and force in his voice! What life and expression in the noble countenance, so full of wrinkles! And what eyes!

Wed., April 14.—I went out walking with Goethe about one. We discussed the styles of various writers.

"On the whole," said Goethe, "philosophical speculation is an injury to the Germans, as it tends to make their style vague, difficult, and obscure. The stronger their attachment to certain philosophical schools, the worse they write. Those Germans who, as men of business and actual life, confine themselves to the practical, write the best. Schiller's style is most noble and impressive whenever he leaves off philosophizing, as I observe every day in his highly interesting letters, with which I am now busy.

"There are likewise among the German women, genial beings who write a really excellent style, and, indeed, in that respect surpass many of our celebrated male writers.

"The English almost always write well; being born orators and practical men, with a tendency to the real.

"The French, in their style, remain true to their general character. They are of a social nature, and therefore never forget the public whom they address; they strive to be clear, that they may convince their reader—agreeable, that they may please him.

"Altogether, the style of a writer is a faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wish to write a clear style, let him be first clear in his thoughts; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul."

Goethe then spoke of his antagonists as a race which would never become extinct. "Their number," said he, "is legion; yet they may be in some degree classified. First, there are my antagonists from stupidity: those who do not understand me, and find fault with me without knowing me. This large company has worried me much in the course of my life; yet shall they be forgiven, for they knew not what they did.

"The second large class is composed of those who envy

me. These grudge me the fortune and the dignified station I have attained through my talents. They pluck at my fame, and would like to destroy me. If I were poor and miserable, they would assail me no more.

"There are many who have been my adversaries, because they have failed themselves. In this class are many of fine talent, but they cannot forgive me for casting them into the shade.

"Fourthly, there are my antagonists from *reasons*. For, as I am a human being, and as such have human faults and weaknesses, my writings cannot be free from them. Yet, as I was constantly bent on my own improvement, and always striving to ennoble myself, I was in a state of constant progress, and it often happened that they blamed me for faults which I had long since left behind. These good folks have injured me least of any, as they shot at me, when I was already miles distant. Generally when a work was finished, it became uninteresting to me; I thought of it no more, but busied myself with some new plan.

"Another large class comprises those who are adversaries, because they differ from me in their views and modes of thought. It is said of the leaves on a tree, that you will scarcely find two perfectly alike, and thus, among a thousand men, you will scarce find two, who harmonize entirely in their views and ways of thinking. This being allowed, I ought less to wonder at having so many opponents, than at having so many friends and adherents. My tendencies were opposed to those of my time, which were wholly subjective; while in my objective efforts, I stood quite alone to my own disadvantage.

"Schiller had, in this respect, great advantage over me. Hence, a certain well-meaning general once gave me plainly to understand that I ought to write like Schiller. I replied by analyzing Schiller's merits, for I knew them better than he. I went quietly on in my own way, not troubling myself further about success, and taking as little notice as possible of my opponents."

We returned, and had a very pleasant time at dinner. Frau von Goethe talked much of Berlin, where she had lately been. She spoke with especial warmth of the Duchess of Cumberland, who had shown her much kindness. Goethe

remembered this princess, who, when very young, had passed some time with his mother, with particular interest.

In the evening, I had a musical treat of a high order at Goethe's house, where some fine singers, under the superintendence of Eberwein, performed part of Handel's Messiah. The Countess Caroline von Egloffstein, Fraulein von Frieriep, with Frau von Pogwisch and Frau von Goethe, joined the female singers, and thus kindly gratified a wish which Goethe had entertained long since.

Goethe, sitting at some distance, wholly absorbed in hearing, passed a happy evening, full of admiration at this noble work.

Mon., April 19.—The greatest philologist of our time, Friedrich August Wolf, from Berlin, is here, on his way towards the south of France. Goethe gave, to-day, on his account, a dinner to his Weimar friends, at which General Superintendent Röhr, Chancellor von Müller, Oberbaudirector Coudray, Professor Riemer, and Hofrath Rehbein, and myself, were present. The conversation was very lively. Wolf was full of witty sallies, Goethe being constantly his opponent in the pleasantest way. "I cannot," said Goethe to me afterwards, "get on with Wolf, at all, without assuming the character of Mephistophiles. Nothing else brings out his hidden treasures."

The *bon mots* at table were too evanescent, and too much the result of the moment, to bear repetition. Wolf was very great in witty turns and repartees, but nevertheless it seemed to me that Goethe always maintained a certain superiority over him.

The hours at table flew by as if with wings, and six o'clock came before we were aware. I went with young Goethe to the theatre, where "Zauberflöte" was played. Afterwards I saw Wolf in the box, with the Grand Duke Carl August.

Wolf remained in Weimar till the 25th, when he set out for the south of France. The state of his health was such that Goethe did not conceal the greatest anxiety about him.

Sun., May 2.—Goethe reproved me for not having visited a certain family of distinction. "You might," said he, "have passed there, during the winter, many delightful

evenings, and have made the acquaintance of many interesting strangers; all which you have lost from God knows what caprice."

"With my excitable temperament," I replied, "and with my disposition to a broad sympathy with others, nothing can be more burdensome and hurtful to me than an overabundance of new impressions. I am neither by education nor habit fitted for general society. My situation in earlier days was such, that I feel as if I had never lived till I came near you. All is new to me. Every evening at the theatre, every conversation with you, makes an era in my existence. Things perfectly indifferent to persons of different education and habits make the deepest impression on me, and as the desire of instructing myself is great, my mind seizes on everything with a certain energy, and draws from it as much nourishment as possible. In this state of mind, I had quite enough in the course of this winter, from the theatre and my connection with you; and I should not have been able to give myself up to other connections and engagements, without disturbing my mind."

"You are an odd fellow," said Goethe, laughing. "Well, do as you please; I will let you have your way."

"And then," continued I, "I usually carry into society my likes and dislikes, and a certain need of loving and being beloved; I seek a nature which may harmonize with my own; I wish to give myself up to this, and to have nothing to do with the others."

"This natural tendency of yours," replied Goethe, "is indeed not of a social kind; but what would be the use of culture, if we did not try to control our natural tendencies? It is a great folly to hope that other men will harmonize with us; I have never hoped this. I have always regarded each man as an independent individual, whom I endeavoured to study, and to understand with all his peculiarities, but from whom I desired no further sympathy. In this way have I been enabled to converse with every man, and thus alone is produced the knowledge of various characters, and the dexterity necessary for the conduct of life. For it is in a conflict with natures opposed to his own that a man must collect his strength to fight his way through, and thus all our different sides are brought out and developed, so that

we soon feel ourselves a match for every foe. You should do the same; you have more capacity for it than you imagine; indeed, you must at all events plunge into the great world, whether you like it or not."

I took due heed of these good, kind words, and determined to act in accordance with them as much as possible.

Towards evening, Goethe invited me to take a drive with him. Our road lay over the hills through Upper Weimar, by which we had a view of the park towards the west. The trees were in blossom, the birches already in full leaf, and the meadows were one green carpet, over which the setting sun cast a glow. We sought out picturesque groups, and could not look enough. We remarked that trees full of white blossoms should not be painted, because they make no picture; just as birches with their foliage are unfit for the foreground of a picture, because the delicate leaf does not sufficiently balance the white trunk; there are no large masses to exercise effects of light and shade. "Raphael," said Goethe, "never introduced the birch with its foliage into the foreground; but only birch trunks broken off, without any leaves. Such a trunk is perfectly suited to a foreground, as its bright form comes out with most powerful effect."

After some slight discussion of other topics, we came upon the mistake of those artists who made religion art, while for them art should be religion. "Religion," said Goethe, "stands in the same relation to art as any other of the higher interests in life. It is merely to be looked upon as material, with similar claims to any other vital material. Faith and want of faith are not the organs with which a work of art is to be apprehended. On the contrary, human powers and capacities of a totally different character are required. Art must address itself to those organs with which we apprehend it; otherwise it misses its effect. A religious material may be a good subject for art, but only in so far as it possesses general human interest. The Virgin with the Child is on this account an excellent subject, and one that may be treated a hundred times, and always seen to gain with pleasure."

In the mean while, we had gone round the thicket (the Weibich), and had turned by Tiefurt into the Weimar road, where we had a view of the setting sun. Goethe was for a

while lost in thought; he then said to me, in the words of one of the ancients—

Untergehend sogar ist's immer dieselbige Sonne.

"Still it continues the self-same sun, e'en while it is setting."

"At the age of seventy-five," continued he, with much cheerfulness, "one must, of course, think sometimes of death. But this thought never gives me the least uneasiness, for I am fully convinced that our spirit is a being of a nature quite indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to set only to our earthly eyes, but which, in reality, never sets, but shines on unceasingly."

The sun had, in the mean while, sunk behind the Ettersberg; we felt in the wood the chill of the evening, and drove all the quicker to Weimar, and to Goethe's house. Goethe urged me to go in with him for a while, and I did so. He was in an extremely engaging, amiable mood. He talked a great deal about his theory of colours, and of his obstinate opponents; remarking that he was sure that he had done something in this science.

"To make an epoch in the world," said he, "two conditions are notoriously essential—a good head and a great inheritance. Napoleon inherited the French Revolution; Frederick the Great, the Silesian War; Luther, the darkness of the Popes; and I, the errors of the Newtonian theory. The present generation has no conception of what I have accomplished in this matter, but posterity will grant that I have by no means come into a bad inheritance!"

Goethe had sent me this morning a roll of papers relative to the theatre, among which I had found some detached remarks, containing the rules and studies which he had made with Wolff and Grüner to qualify them for good actors. I found these details important and highly instructive for young actors, and therefore proposed to put them together, and make from them a sort of theatrical catechism. Goethe consented, and we discussed the matter further. This gave us occasion to speak of some distinguished actors who had been formed in his school; and I took the opportunity to ask some questions about Frau von Heigendorf. "I may," said Goethe, "have influenced her, but, properly

speaking, she is not my pupil. She was, as it were, born on the boards, and was as decided, ready, and adroit in anything as a duck in the water. She needed not my instruction, but did what was right instinctively, and perhaps without knowing it."

We then talked of the many years he had superintended the theatre, and the infinite time which had thus been lost to literary production. "Yes," said he, "I may have missed writing many a good thing, but when I reflect, I am not sorry. I have always regarded all I have done solely as symbolical; and, in fact, it has been tolerably indifferent to me whether I have made pots or dishes."

(Sup.*) *Wed., May 5.* The papers containing the studies which Goethe prosecuted with the actors Wolff and Grüner have occupied me very pleasantly during the last few days; and I have succeeded in bringing these dismembered notices into a sort of form, so that something has arisen from them which may be regarded as the beginning of a catechism for actors. I spoke with Goethe about this work to-day, and we went through the various topics in detail. The remarks concerning pronunciation, and the laying aside of provincialisms, appeared to us particularly important.

"I have, in my long practice," said Goethe, "become acquainted with beginners from all parts of Germany. The pronunciation of the North German leaves little to be desired: it is pure, and may in many respects be looked upon as a model. On the contrary, I have often had a great deal of trouble with native Silesians, Austrians, and Saxons. The natives of our beloved town, Weimar, have also given me a great deal to do. Among these have arisen the most ridiculous mistakes; because in schools here they are not forced to distinguish, by a marked pronunciation, *b* from *p*, and *d* from *t*. One would scarcely believe that *b*, *p*, *d*, and *t* are generally considered to be four different letters; for they only speak of a hard and a soft *b*, and of a hard and a soft *d*, and thus seem tacitly to intimate that *p* and *t* do not exist. With such people, *Pein* (pain) sounds like *Bein* (leg), *Pas* (pass) like *Bass* (bass), and *Teckel* † like *Deckel* (cover)."

† A provincial word for a terrier.

"An actor of this town," added I, "who did not properly distinguish *t* from *d*, lately made a mistake of the kind, which appeared very striking. He was playing a lover, who had been guilty of a little infidelity; whereupon the angry young lady showered upon him various violent reproaches. Growing impatient, he had to exclaim, '*O ende!*' (O cease!); but being unable to distinguish the *T* from the *D*, he exclaimed, '*O ente!*' (O duck!) which excited general laughter."

"The circumstance is very quaint," returned Goethe, "and will do well to mention in our 'Theatrical Catechism.'"

"Lately, a young singer, likewise of this town," continued I, "who could not make the distinction between the *t* and the *d*, had to say, '*Ich will dich den Eingeweichten übergeben*' (I will give you up to the initiated); but as she pronounced the *t* as *d*, it sounded as if she said, '*Ich will dich den Eingeweiden übergeben*' (I will give you up to the bowels)."

"Again, an actor of this town," continued I, "who played the part of a servant, had to say to a stranger, '*Mein Herr ist nicht zu Haus, er sitzt im Rathe*' (my master is not at home, he sits in council); but as he could not distinguish the *t* from the *d*, it sounded as if he said '*Mein Herr ist nicht zu Haus, er sitzt im Rade*' (my master is not at home, he sits in the wheel)."

"These incidents," said Goethe, "are not bad, and we will notice them. Thus, if any one who does not distinguish the *p* from the *b*, has to call out, '*Packe ihn an!*' (seize him), but, instead of this, exclaims, '*Backe ihn an!*' (stick him on), it is very laughable."

"In a similar manner," said Goethe, "the *ü* is frequently pronounced like *i*, which has been the cause of not a few scandalous mistakes. I have frequently heard said, instead of *Küstenbewohner* (inhabitant of the coast), *Kistenbewohner* (inhabitant of the box); instead of *Thürstück* (a painting over a door), *Thierstück* (animal-picture); instead of *Trübe* (gloomy), *Triebe* (impulses); and instead of *Ihr müsst* (you must), *Ihr misst* (you miss);—not, however, without a hearty laugh."

"I lately noticed at the theatre," said I, "a very ludi-

crous case of the kind, in which a lady, in a critical situation, has to follow a man, whom she had never seen before. She had to say, '*Ich kenne Dich zwar nicht, aber ich setze mein ganzes Vertrauen in den Edelmuth Deiner Züge*' (I do not know you, but I place entire confidence in the nobility of your countenance); but as she pronounced the *ä* like *i*, she said, '*Ich kenne Dich zwar nicht, aber ich setze mein ganzes Vertrauen in den Edel-muth Deiner Ziege*' (I do not know you, but I place entire confidence in the nobility of your goat)." This caused great laughter.

"This anecdote is not bad," returned Goethe, "and we will notice it also. Thus, too," continued he, "*g* and *k* are here frequently confounded; *g* being used instead of *k*, and *k* instead of *g*, possibly from uncertainty whether the letter should be hard or soft, a result of the doctrine so much in vogue here. You have probably often heard, or will hear, at some future time, in our theatre, *Kardenhaus* (card-house) instead of *Gardenhaus* (garden-house), *Kasce* (chest) instead of *Gesce* (hane), *Klauben* (to pick out) instead of *Glauben* (to believe), *bekränzen* (to enc wreath) instead of *bezeugen* (to laud), and *Kunst* (art) instead of *Gunst* (favour)."

"I have already heard something similar," returned I. "An actor of this town had to say, '*Dein Gram geht mir zu Herzen*,' (thy grief touches my heart). But he pronounced the *g* like *k*, and said very distinctly, '*Dein Kram geht mir zu Herzen*' (thy goods * touch my heart)."

"Besides," answered Goethe, "we hear this substitution of *g* for *k*, not merely amongst actors, but even amongst very learned theologians. I once personally experienced an incident of this sort; and I will relate it to you.

"When I, some five years ago, stayed for some time at Jena, and lodged at the 'Fir Tree,' a theological student one morning presented himself to me. After he had conversed with me very agreeably for some time, he made, as he was just going, a request of a most peculiar kind. He begged me to allow him to preach in my stead on the next Sunday. I immediately discovered which way the wind blew, and that the hopeful youth was one of those who

* Or lumber. *Tours.*

confound *g* for *k*. I, therefore, answered him in a friendly manner, that I could not personally assist him in this affair; but that he would be sure to attain his object, if he would be so good as to apply to Archdeacon Koethe."

Thurs., May 6.—When I came to Weimar, last summer, it was not, as I have said, my intention to remain here, I only intended to make Goethe's personal acquaintance, and then to visit the Rhine, where I intended to live some time in a suitable place.

However, I had been detained in Weimar by Goethe's remarkable kindness, and my relation to him had become more and more practical, inasmuch as he drew me more and more into his own interest, and gave me much important work to do, preparatory to a complete edition of his works.

Thus in the course of last winter, I collected several divisions of "tame Xenia" (*zahme Xenien*) from the most confused bundles of paper, arranged a volume of new poems, and the "Theatrical Catechism," and also the outlines of a treatise on "Dilettantism," in the different arts.

I had, however, never forgotten my design of seeing the Rhine; and Goethe himself, that I might not carry within me the sting of an unsatisfied desire, advised me to devote some months of this summer to a visit to that region.

It was, however, decidedly his wish that I should return to Weimar. He observed that it was not good to break ties scarcely formed, and that everything in life to be of value must have a sequence. He, at the same time, plainly intimated to me that he had selected me and Riemer, not only to aid him in preparing a new and complete edition of his works, but to take the whole charge of it in case he should be suddenly called away, as might naturally happen at his advanced age.

He showed me this morning immense packages of letters, laid out in what is called the Chamber of Busts (*Büsten-Zimmer*). "These," said he, "are all letters which I have received since 1780, from the most distinguished men of our country. There lies hoarded in these a rich treasure of thoughts, which it shall some time be your office to impart to the public. I am now having a chest made, in which these letters will be put, together with the rest of my

literary remains. I wish you, before you set out on your journey, to put them all in order, that I may feel easy about them, and have a care the less."

He then told me that he intended to visit Marienbad this summer, but did not intend to go till the end of July, the reasons for which he disclosed to me in confidence. He expressed a wish that I should be back before his departure, that he might speak to me.

A few weeks afterwards, I visited my friends in Hanover, then stopped during the months of June and July on the Rhine, where, especially at Frankfort, Heidelberg, and Bonn, I made many valuable acquaintances among Goethe's friends.*

(Sup.) *Tues., May 18.*—This evening at Goethe's, in company with Riemer.

Goethe talked to us about an English poem, of which geology was the subject. He made, as he went on, an impromptu translation of it, with so much spirit, imagination, and good humour, that every individual object stood before us, with as much life as if it were his own invention at the moment. The hero of the poem, *King Coal*, was seen, in his brilliant hall of audience, seated upon his throne, his consort *Pyrites* by his side, waiting for the nobles of the kingdom. Entering according to their rank, they appeared one by one before the king, and were introduced as Duke *Granite*, Marquis *Slate*, Countess *Porphyry*, and so on with the rest, who were all characterized by some excellent epithet and joke. Then followed Sir Lorenzo *Chalk*, a man of great possessions, and well received at court. He excuses his mother, the Lady *Marble*, on the ground that her residence is rather distant. She is a very polished and accomplished lady, and a cause of her non-appearance at court, on this occasion, is, that she is involved in an intrigue with *Canova*, who likes to flirt with her. *Tufa*, whose hair is decked with lizards and fishes, appears rather intoxicated. Hans *Marl* and Jacob *Clay* do not appear till the end; the last is a particular favourite of the queen,

* This short statement, though attached to the conversation of 6th May in the first volume, will be read more properly after 26th May (p. 92), which is taken from the supplemental volume.

because he has promised her a collection of shells. Thus the whole went on for a long time in the most cheerful tone; but the details were too minute for me to note the further progress of the story.

"Such a poem," said Goethe, "is quite calculated to amuse people of the world; while at the same time it diffuses a quantity of useful information, which no one ought properly to be without. A taste for science is thus excited amongst the higher circles; and no one knows how much good may ultimately result from such an entertaining half-joke. Many a clever person may be induced to make observations himself, within his own immediate sphere. And such individual observations, drawn from the natural objects with which we are in contact, are often the more valuable, the less the observer professionally belongs to the particular department of science."

"You appear, then, to intimate," returned I, "that the more one knows, the worse one observes."

"Certainly," said Goethe, "when the knowledge which is handed down is combined with errors. As soon as any one belongs to a certain narrow creed in science, every unprejudiced and true perception is gone. The decided Vulcanist always sees through the spectacles of a Vulcanist; and every Neptunist, and every professor of the newest elevation-theory, through his own. The contemplation of the world, with all these theorists, who are devoted to an exclusive tendency, has lost its innocence, and the objects no longer appear in their natural purity. If these learned men, then, give an account of their observations, we obtain, notwithstanding their love of truth as individuals, no actual truth with reference to the objects themselves; but we always receive these objects with the taste of a strong, subjective mixture.

"I am, however, far from maintaining that an unprejudiced, correct knowledge is a drawback to observation. I am much more inclined to support the old truth, that we, properly speaking, have only eyes and ears for what we know. The musician by profession hears, in an orchestral performance, every instrument and every single tone, whilst one unacquainted with the art is wrapped up in the massive effect of the whole. A man merely bent upon

enjoyment sees in a green or flowery meadow only a pleasant plain, while the eye of a botanist discovers an endless detail of the most varied plants and grasses."

"Still everything has its measure and goal, and as it has been said in my 'Goetz von Berlichingen,' that the son, from pure learning, does not know his own father, so in science do we find people who can neither see nor hear through sheer learning and hypothesis. Such people look at once within; they are so occupied by what is revolving in themselves, that they are like a man in a passion, who passes his dearest friends in the street without seeing them. The observation of nature requires a certain purity of mind, which cannot be disturbed or pre-occupied by anything. The beetle on the flower does not escape the child; he has devoted all his senses to a single, simple interest; and it never strikes him that, at the same moment, something remarkable may be going on in the formation of the clouds to distract his glances in that direction."

"Then," returned I, "children and the child-like would be good hod-men in science."

"Would to God!" exclaimed Goethe, "we were all nothing more than good hod-men. It is just because we will be more, and carry about with us a great apparatus of philosophy and hypothesis, that we spoil all."

Then followed a pause in the conversation, which Riemer broke by mentioning Lord Byron and his death. Goethe thereupon gave a brilliant elucidation of his writings, and was full of the highest praise and the purest acknowledgment.

"However," continued he, "although Byron has died so young, literature has not suffered an essential loss, through a hindrance to its further extension. Byron could, in a certain sense, go no further. He had reached the summit of his creative power, and whatever he might have done in the future, he would have been unable to extend the boundaries of his talent. In the incomprehensible poem, 'The Vision of Judgment,' he has done the utmost of which he was capable."

The discourse then turned upon the Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, and his resemblance to Lord Byron, when Goethe could not conceal the superiority of the Englishman, in spirit,

grasp of the world, and productive power. "One cannot," continued he, "compare these poets with each other, without annihilating one by the other. Byron is the burning thorn-bush which reduces the holy cedar of Lebanon to ashes. The great epic poem of the Italian has maintained its fame for centuries; but yet, with a single line of 'Don Juan,' one could poison the whole of 'Jerusalem delivered.'"

(Sup.) *Wed., May 26.*—To-day I took leave of Goethe, in order to visit my friends in Hanover, and thence to proceed to the Rhine, according to my long meditated plan. Goethe was very affectionate, and pressed me in his arms. "If at Hanover you should chance to meet, at Rehberg's, Charlotte Kestner, the old friend of my youth, remember me to her kindly. In Frankfort, I commend you to my friends Willemmers, the Count Reinhardt, and the Schlossers. Then both in Heidelberg and Bonn, you will find friends who are truly devoted to me, and from whom you will receive a most hearty welcome. I did intend again to spend some time at Marienbad this summer; but I shall not go until after your return."

The parting with Goethe was very trying to me; though I went away with the firm conviction of seeing him again, safe and sound, at the end of two months.

Nevertheless, I felt very happy next day when the carriage conveyed me toward my beloved home in Hanover, to which my heartiest wishes are constantly directed.

Tues., Aug. 10.—About a week ago, I returned from my tour on the Rhine. Goethe expressed much joy at my arrival; and I, on my part, was not less pleased to be with him again. He had a great deal to say to me; so that for the first few days I stirred but little from his side. His design of going to Marienbad he has abandoned, and does not intend to travel this summer. "Now you are again here," he said, "I may have a very pleasant August."

A few days ago, he put into my hands the commencement of a continuation of "Wahrheit und Dichtung," written on quarto leaves, and scarcely a finger's breadth thick. Part is complete, but the greater part consists of mere indications. However, it is already divided into five books, and the leaves containing the sketch are so arranged that,

with a little trouble, one can take a survey of the general import.

The portion that is already finished appears to me so excellent, and the import of the sketched portion to be so valuable, that I regret exceedingly to see a work which promises so much instruction and enjoyment come to a standstill, and I shall make every effort to urge Goethe to continue and complete it as soon as possible.

The plan of the whole has much of the character of a novel. A graceful, tender, passionate love-affair, cheerful in its origin, idyllic in its progress, tragic at the end, through a tacit but mutual renunciation, runs through four books, and combines them to an organized whole. The charm of Lili's character, described in detail, is of a sort to captivate every reader, just as it held the lover himself in such bonds that he could only save himself by repeated flight.

The epoch of life set forth is of a highly romantic nature, or, at least, becomes so as it is developed in the principal character. But it acquires special significance and importance from the circumstance that, as an epoch preceding the position at Weimar, it is decisive for the whole life. If, therefore, any section of Goethe's life has any interest, and raises a wish for a detailed description, it is precisely this.

To excite in Goethe a new ardour for this work, which has been interrupted and has lain untouched for years, I have not only talked with him on the subject, but have sent him the following notes, that he may see at once what is finished and what has still to be worked out and arranged.*

FIRST BOOK.—This book, which, according to the original intention, may be regarded as complete, contains a sort of exposition, inasmuch as it expresses the wish for a participation in worldly affairs, the fulfilment of which takes place at the end of the whole epoch, through the invitation to Weimar. However, that it may be connected more closely with the whole, I suggest that the relation to Lili, which runs through the four following books, should begin in this first book, and continue as far as the excursion to Offen-

* The last five books of "*Wahrheit und Dichtung*" were afterwards published in Goethe's posthumous works, but Eckermann's arrangement was not adopted.—*Trans.*

bach. Thus, too, this book would gain in compass and importance, and too great an increase of the second would be prevented.

SECOND BOOK.—The idyllic life at Offenbach would then open this second book, and would go through with the happy love affair, till it, at last, begins to assume a doubtful, earnest, and even tragical character. The contemplation of serious matters, promised by the sketch in reference to Stilling, is well placed here, and much that is instructive may be anticipated from the design, which is simply indicated by a few words.

THIRD BOOK.—The third book, which contains the plan of a continuation of "Faust," is to be regarded as an episode, but is connected with the other books, by the attempt at a separation from Lili, which remains to be carried out. Whether the plan of "Faust" is to be communicated or kept back is a doubtful point, which cannot be resolved until we examine the fragments now ready, and make up our minds whether the hope of a continuation of "Faust" is to be given up or not.

FOURTH BOOK.—The third book would terminate with the attempt at a separation from Lili. This fourth book, therefore, very aptly begins with the arrival of the Stolbergs and of Haugwitz, by which the journey into Switzerland and the first flight from Lili are brought about. The complete sketch of this book promises the most interesting matter, and excites a wish for the most thorough details. The passion for Lili, which is constantly bursting forth, and which cannot be suppressed, glows through the whole book with the fire of youthful love, and gives a peculiar, pleasant, and magical light to the situation of the traveller.

FIFTH BOOK.—This beautiful book is likewise nearly finished; at least the latter part, up to the conclusion, which touches on the unfathomable nature of fate, may be regarded as quite finished; and only a little is wanting for the introduction, of which there is already a very clear sketch. The working-out is, however, the more necessary and desirable, as the first mention is made of the Weimar affairs, and thus our interest for them is first excited.

Mon., Aug. 16.—My conversations with Goethe have lately been very abundant in matter, but I have been so much engaged with other things as to render it impossible to write down anything of importance, from the fulness of his discourse.

Only the following detached sentences are found noted down in my diary; the connection between them and the occasion that gave rise to them, I have forgotten:—

Men are swimming pots, which knock against each other.

In the morning we are shrewdest, but also most anxious; for even anxiety is a species of shrewdness, though only a passive one. Stupidity is without anxiety.

We must not take the faults of our youth into our old age; for old age brings with it its own defects.

Court life is like music, in which every one must keep time.

Courtiers would die of *ennui*, if they could not fill up their time with ceremonies.

It is not right to counsel a prince to give way, even in the most trivial matter.

He who would train actors must have infinite patience.

Tues., Nov. 9.—I passed this evening with Goethe. We talked of Klopstock and Herder; and I liked to listen to him, as he explained to me the merits of those men.

“Without those powerful precursors,” said Goethe, “our literature could not have become what it now is. When they appeared, they were before their age, and were obliged, as it were, to drag it after them; but now the age has far outrun them, and they who were once so necessary and important have now ceased to be *means to an end*. A young man who would take Klopstock and Herder for his teachers nowadays would be far behindhand.”

We talked over Klopstock’s “Messiah” and his Odes, touching on their merits and their defects. We agreed that he had no faculty for observing and apprehending the visible world, or for drawing characters; and that he therefore wanted the qualities most essential to the epic and dramatic poet, or, perhaps it might be said, to the poet generally.

"An ode occurs to me," said the German Muse run a race with when one thinks what a picture run one against the other, throw kicking up the dust, one must Klopstock did not really have but as he wrote, else he could not mistakes."

I asked how he had felt towards

"I venerated him," said Goethe which was peculiar to me; I loved I revered whatever he had done reflecting upon it, or finding favourable qualities work upon me; for that

We came back to Herder, and his works he thought the best.

"I venerated him," (*Ideen zur* replied Goethe, "are undoubtedly he took the negative side, and v

"Considering the great weight cannot understand how he had subjects. For instance, I cannot that period of German literature manuscript of 'Goetz von Berli of its merits, and with taunting utterly wanted organs to perceive

"Yes, Herder was unfortunate Goethe; "nay," added he, with present at this conversation, it

"On the other hand," said I, urged you to print 'Goetz.'"

"He was indeed an odd but I "Print the thing," quoth he, print it.' He did not wish in it, and he was right; for it was not better."

Wed., Nov. 24.—I went to before going to the theatre, and cheerful. He inquired about are here. I told him that I Doolan a German translation

conversation to Roman and Grecian history; and Goethe expressed himself as follows:—

"The Roman history," said he, "is no longer suited to us. We have become too humane for the triumphs of Caesar not to be repugnant to our feelings. Neither are we much charmed by the history of Greece. When this people turns against a foreign foe, it is, indeed, great and glorious; but the division of the states, and their eternal wars with one another, where Greek fights against Greek, are insufferable. Besides, the history of our own time is thoroughly great and important; the battles of Iæpsic and Waterloo stand out with such prominence, that that of Marathon and others like it are gradually eclipsed. Neither are our individual heroes inferior to theirs; the French Marshals, Blücher, and Wellington, vie with any of the heroes of antiquity."

We then talked of the late French literature, and the daily increasing interest in German works manifested by the French.

"The French," said Goethe, "do well to study and translate our writers; for, limited as they are both in form and motives, they can only look without for means. We Germans may be reproached for a certain formlessness; but in matter we are their superiors. The theatrical productions of Kotzebue and Illand are so rich in motives that they may pluck them a long time before all is used up. But, especially, our philosophical Ideality is welcome to them; for every Ideal is serviceable to revolutionary aims.

"The French have understanding and *esprit*, but neither a solid basis nor piety. What serves the moment, what helps his party, seems right to the Frenchman. Hence they praise us, never from an acknowledgment of our merits, but only when they can strengthen their party by our views."

We then talked about our own literature, and of the obstacles in the way of some of our latest young poets.

"The majority of our young poets," said Goethe, "have no fault but this, that their subjectivity is not important, and that they cannot find matter in the objective. At best, they only find a material, which is similar to themselves, which corresponds to their own subjectivity; but as for

"I wish," said he, "your friends would leave you in peace. Why should you trouble yourself with things which lie quite out of your way, and are contrary to the tendencies of your nature? We have gold, silver, and paper money, and each has its own value; but to do justice to each, you must understand the exchange. And so in literature. You understand the metallic, but not the paper currency: you are not equal to this; your criticisms will be unjust, and do hurt. If you wish to be just, and give everything its proper place, you must first become acquainted with our middle literature, and make up your mind to a study by no means trifling. You must look back and see what the Schlegels proposed and performed, and then read all our later authors, Franz Horn, Hoffmann, Clauren, &c. Even this is not enough. You must also take in all the journals of the day, from the 'Morgenblatt' to the 'Abend zeitung,' in order that nothing which comes out may escape you; and thus you will spoil your best days and hours. Then all new books, which you would criticise with any degree of profundity, you must not only skim over, but study. How would you relish that? And, finally, if you find that what is bad is bad, you must not say so, if you would not run the risk of being at war with all the world.

"No; as I have said, decline the proposal; it is not in your way. Generally, beware of dissipating your powers, and strive to concentrate them. Had I been so wise thirty years ago, I should have done very differently. How much time I lost with Schiller on his 'Horen' and 'Musen-Almanachs!' Now, when I have just been looking over our correspondence, I feel this most forcibly, and cannot think without chagrin on those undertakings which made the world abuse us, and which were entirely without result for ourselves. Talent thinks it can do whatever it sees others doing; but this is not the case, and it will have to repent its *Faux-frais* (idle expenses). What good does it do to curl up your hair for a single night? You have paper in your hair, that is all; next night, it is straight again."

"The great point," he continued, "is to make a capital that will not be exhausted. This you will acquire by the study of the English language and literature, which you have already begun. Keep to that, and continually make

use of the advantages you now possess in the acquaintance of the young Englishmen. You studied the ancient languages but little during your youth; therefore, seek now a stronghold in the literature of so able a nation as the English. And, besides, our own literature is chiefly the offspring of theirs! Whence have we our novels, our tragedies, but from Goldsmith, Fielding, and Shakspeare? And in our own day, where will you find in Germany three literary heroes, who can be placed on a level with Lord Byron, Moore, and Walter Scott? Once more, ground yourself in English, concentrate your powers for something good, and give up everything which can produce no result of consequence to you, and is not suited to you."

I rejoiced that I had thus made Goethe speak. I was perfectly satisfied in my mind, and determined to comply with his advice in every respect.

Chancellor von Müller was now announced, and sat down with us. The conversation turned once more on the bust of Dante, which stood before us, and on his life and works. The obscurity of this author was especially mentioned—how his own countrymen had never understood him, so that it would be impossible for a foreigner to penetrate such darkness. "To you," said Goethe, turning towards me, with a friendly air, "the study of this poet is hereby absolutely forbidden by your father confessor."

Goethe also remarked that the difficult rhyme is, in a great measure, the cause of his obscurity. For the rest, he spoke of Dante with extreme reverence; and I observed that he was not satisfied with the word *talent*, but called him a *nature*, as if thus wishing to express something more comprehensive, more full of prescience, of deeper insight, and wider scope.

Thurs., Dec. 9.—I went this evening to Goethe. He cordially held out his hand, and greeted me with praises of my poem on "Schellhorn's Jubilee." I told him that I had written to refuse the proposal from England.

"Thank Heaven!" said he; "then you are free and at peace once more. And now let me warn you against something else. The composers will come and want an opera; but you must be steadfast and refuse them, for that is a work which leads to nothing, and only loses time."

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the pictures and a large chart of the mountains which adorned the walls, a book-case full of portfolios. These, I told him, contained many drawings from the hands of celebrated masters, and engravings after the best pictures of all schools, which Goethe had, during a long life, been gradually collecting, and the repeated contemplation of which afforded him entertainment.

After we had waited a few minutes, Goethe came in, and greeted us cordially. He said to Mr. H., "I presume I may address you in German, as I hear you are already well versed in our language." Mr. H. answered with a few polite words, and Goethe requested us to be seated.

Mr. H.'s manners and appearance must have made a good impression on Goethe; for his sweetness and mild serenity were manifested towards the stranger in their real beauty. "You did well," said he, "to come hither to learn German; for here you will quickly and easily acquire, not only a knowledge of the language, but also of the elements on which it rests, our soil, climate, mode of life, manners, social habits, and constitution, and carry it away with you to England."

Mr. H. replied, "The interest taken in the German language is now great, so that there is now scarcely a young Englishman of good family who does not learn German."

"We Germans," said Goethe, good-humouredly, "have, however, been half a century before your nation in this respect. For fifty years I have been busy with the English language and literature; so that I am well acquainted with your writers, your ways of living, and the administration of your country. If I went over to England, I should be no stranger there.

"But, as I said before, your young men do well to come to us and learn our language; for, not only does our literature merit attention on its own account, but no one can deny that he who now knows German well can dispense with many other languages. Of the French, I do not speak; it is the language of conversation, and is indispensable in travelling, because everybody understands it, and in all countries we can get on with it instead of a good interpreter. But as for Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish, we can read the best works of those nations in such excellent German

translations, that, unless we have some particular object in view, we need not spend much time upon the tedious study of those languages. It is in the German nature duly to honour after its kind, everything produced by other nations, and to accommodate itself to foreign peculiarities. This, with the great flexibility of our language, makes German translations thoroughly faithful and complete. And it is not to be denied that, in general, you get on very far with a good translation. Frederick the Great did not know Latin, but he read Cicero in the French translation with as much profit as we who read him in the original."

Then, turning the conversation on the theatre, he asked Mr. H. whether he went frequently thither. "Every evening," he replied, "and find that I thus gain much towards the understanding of the language."

"It is remarkable," said Goethe, "that the ear, and generally the understanding, gets the start of speaking; so that a man may very soon comprehend all he hears, but by no means express it all."

"I experience daily," said Mr. H., "the truth of that remark. I understand very well whatever I hear or read; I even feel when an incorrect expression is made use of in German. But when I speak, nothing will flow, and I cannot express myself as I wish. In light conversation at court, jests with the ladies, a chat at balls, and the like, I succeed pretty well. But, if I try to express an opinion on any important topic, to say anything peculiar or luminous, I cannot get on."

"Be not discouraged by that," said Goethe, "since it is hard enough to express much uncommon matter in one's own mother tongue."

He then asked what Mr. H. read in German literature. "I have read 'Egmont,'" he replied, "and found so much pleasure in the perusal, that I returned to it three times. 'Torquato Tasso,' too, has afforded me much enjoyment. Now, I am reading 'Faust,' but find that it is somewhat difficult."

Goethe laughed at these last words. "Really," said he, "I would not have advised you to undertake 'Faust.' It is mad stuff, and goes quite beyond all ordinary feeling. But since you have done it of your own accord, without asking

my advice, you will see how you will get through. He is so strange an individual, that only few can sympathize with his internal condition. Then the character of *Meville* is, on account of his irony, and also because of the living result of an extensive acquaintance with the world, very difficult. But you will see what lights open up in *'Tasso,'* on the other hand, lies far nearer the feelings of mankind, and the elaboration of its feelings is favourable to an easy comprehension of it."

"Yet," said Mr. H., "*'Tasso'* is thought difficult by many, and people have wondered to hear me say that I was reading it."

"What is chiefly needed for *'Tasso,'*" replied Goethe, "is that one should be no longer a child, and should have been in good society. A young man of good family, with sufficient mind and delicacy, and also with enough of culture, such as will be produced by intercourse with accomplished men of the higher class, will not find *'Tasso'* difficult."

The conversation turning upon "*Egmont*," he said, "I wrote *'Egmont'* in 1775,—fifty years ago. I adhered closely to history, and strove to be as accurate as possible. Ten years afterwards, when I was in Rome, I saw in the newspapers that the revolutionary scenes in the Netherlands there described were exactly repeated. From this that the world remains ever the same, and that my picture must have some life in it."

Amid this and similar conversation, the hour for the theatre had come. We rose, and Goethe dismissed us in a friendly manner.

As we went homeward, I asked Mr. H. how he was pleased with Goethe. "I have never," said he, "known a man who, with all his attractive gentleness, had so much native dignity. However he may condescend, he is still the great man."

Tues., Jan. 18.—I went to Goethe about five o'clock. I had not seen him for some days, and passed a delightful evening. I found him sitting in his working-room, talking, during the twilight, with his son and Herr Rehbein, his physician. I seated myself at the table with them. We talked a while in the dusk; then lights

brought in, and I had the happiness to see Goethe looking perfectly fresh and cheerful.

As usual, he inquired with interest what had happened to me of late, and I replied that I had made the acquaintance of a poetess. I was able at the same time, to praise her uncommon talent, and Goethe, who was likewise acquainted with some of her productions, agreed with my commendation.

"One of her poems," said he, "in which she describes the country near her home, is of a highly peculiar character. She has a good tendency towards outward objects; and is besides not destitute of valuable internal qualities. We might indeed find much fault with her; but we will let her alone, and not disturb her in the path which her talent will show her."

The conversation now turned on poetesses in general; Hofrath Rehbein remarked that the poetical talent of ladies often seemed to him as a sexual instinct of the intellect. "Hear him," said Goethe, laughing, and looking at me; "sexual instinct, indeed! how the physician explains it!"

"I know not," said Rehbein, "whether I express myself right; but it is something of the sort. Usually, these beings have not been fortunate in love, and they now seek compensation in intellectual pursuits. Had they been married in time, and borne children, they would never have thought of poetical productions."

"I will not inquire," said Goethe, "how far you are right in this case; but, as to the talent of ladies in other departments, I have always found that they ceased on marriage. I have known girls who drew finely; but so soon as they became wives and mothers it was all over: they were busy with their children, and never touched a pencil."

"But our poetesses," continued he, with much animation, "might write and poetize as they pleased if only our men would not write like women. This it is that does not please me. Look at our periodicals and annals; see how all becomes weaker and weaker. Were a chapter of Cellini now printed in the '*Morgenblatt*,' what a figure it would make!"

"However," he continued, in a lively manner, "let us forget all that, and rejoice in our brave girl at Halle, who with masculine spirit introduces us into the Socratic world."

"I am, therefore," said I, "always surprised at the learned, who seem to suppose that poetizing proceeds not from life to the poem, but from the book to the poem. They are always saying, 'He got this here; he got that there.' If, for instance, they find passages in Shakspeare which are also to be found in the ancients, they say he must have taken them from the ancients. Thus there is a situation in Shakspeare, where, on the sight of a beautiful girl, the parents are congratulated who call her daughter, and the youth who will lead her home as his bride. And because the same thing occurs in Homer, Shakspeare, forsooth, has taken it from Homer. How odd! As if one had to go so far for such things, and did not have them before one's eyes, feel them and utter them every day."

"Ah, yes," said Goethe, "it is very ridiculous."

"Lord Byron, too," said I, "is no wiser, when he takes 'Faust' to pieces, and thinks you found one thing here, the other there."

"The greater part of those fine things cited by Lord Byron," said Goethe, "I have never even read, much less did I think of them, when I was writing 'Faust.' But Lord Byron is only great as a poet; as soon as he reflects, he is a child. He knows not how to help himself against the stupid attacks of the same kind made upon him by his own countrymen. He ought to have expressed himself more strongly against them. 'What is there is mine,' he should have said, 'and whether I got it from a book or from life, is of no consequence; the only point is, whether I have made a right use of it.' Walter Scott used a scene from my 'Egmont,' and he had a right to do so; and because he did it well, he deserves praise. He has also copied the character of my Mignon in one of his romances; but whether with equal judgment, is another question. Lord Byron's transformed Devil* is a continuation of Mephistophiles, and quite right too. If, from the whim of originality, he had departed from the model, he would certainly have fared worse. Thus, my Mephistophiles sings a

* This, doubtless, means the "Deformed Transformed," and the fact that this poem was not published till January, 1824, rendering it probable that Goethe had not actually seen it, accounts for the inaccuracy of the expression.—*Trans.*

song from Shakespeare, and why should he not? Why should I give myself the trouble of inventing one of my own, when this said just what was wanted. If, too, the prologue to my 'Faust' is something like the beginning of Job, that is again quite right, and I am rather to be praised than censured."

Goethe was in the best humour. He sent for a bottle of wine, and filled for Riemer and me; he himself drank Marienbad water. He seemed to have appointed this evening for looking over, with Riemer, the manuscript of the continuation of his autobiography, perhaps in order to improve it here and there, in point of expression. "Let Eckermann stay and hear it too," said Goethe; which words I was very glad to hear, and he then laid the manuscript before Riemer, who began to read, commencing with the year 1795.

I had already, in the course of the summer, had the pleasure of repeatedly reading and reflecting on the still unpublished record of those years, down to the latest time. But now to hear them read aloud in Goethe's presence, afforded quite a new enjoyment. Riemer paid especial attention to the mode of expression; and I had occasion to admire his great dexterity, and his affluence of words and phrases. But in Goethe's mind the epoch of life described was revived; he revelled in recollections, and on the mention of single persons and events, filled out the written narrative by the details he orally gave us. That was a precious evening! The most distinguished of his contemporaries were talked over; but the conversation always came back to Schiller, who was so interwoven with this period, from 1795 to 1800. The theatre had been the object of their united efforts, and Goethe's best works belong to this time. "Wilhelm Meister" was completed; "Hermann und Dorothea" planned and written; "Cellini" translated for the "Horen;" the "Xenien" written by both for Schiller's "Museummensch;" every day brought with it points of contact. Of all this we talked this evening, and Goethe had full opportunity for the most interesting communications.

"'Hermann und Dorothea,'" said he, "is almost the only one of my larger poems which still satisfies me; I can

never read it without strong interest. I love it best in the Latin translation; there it seems to me nobler, and as if it had returned to its original form."

"Wilhelm Meister" was often a subject of discourse. Schiller blamed me for interweaving tragic elements which do not belong to the novel. Yet he was wrong, as we all know. In his letters to me, there are most important views and opinions with respect to 'Wilhelm Meister.' But this work is one of the most incalculable productions; I myself can scarcely be said to have the key to it. People seek a central point, and that is hard, and not even right. I should think a rich manifold life, brought close to our eyes, would be enough in itself, without any express tendency, which, after all, is only for the intellect. But if anything of the sort is insisted upon, it will perhaps be found in the words which Frederic, at the end, addresses to the hero, when he says,—'Thou seem'st to me like Saul the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses and found a kingdom.' Keep only to this; for, in fact, the whole work seems to say nothing more than that man, despite all his follies and errors, being led by a higher hand, reaches some happy goal at last."

We then talked of the high degree of culture which during the last fifty years, had become general among the middle classes of Germany, and Goethe ascribed the merit of this not so much to Lessing as to Herder and Wieland. "Lessing," said he, "was of the very highest understanding and only one equally great could truly learn of him. To the half faculty he was dangerous." He mentioned a journalist who had formed himself on Lessing, and at the end of the last century had played a part indeed, but far from a noble one, because he was so inferior to his great predecessor.

"All Upper Germany," said he, "is indebted to Wieland for its style. It has learned much from him; and the capability of expressing itself correctly is not the least."

On mentioning the "Xenien,"* he especially praised those of Schiller, which he called sharp and biting, while he called his own innocent and trivial.

* It need scarcely be mentioned that this is the name given to a collection of sarcastic epigrams by Goethe and Schiller.—*Trans.*

"The 'Thierkreis' (Zodiac), which is by Schiller," said he, "I always read with admiration. The good effects which the 'Xenien' had upon the German literature of their time are beyond calculation." Many persons said to whom the "Xenien" were directed, were mentioned on this occasion, but their names have escaped my memory.

After we had read and talked over the manuscript to the end of the year 1800, interrupted by the extraordinary and other observations from Goethe, he put aside the paper, and had a little supper placed at one end of the table, which we were sitting. We partook of it, but Goethe did not touch a morsel; indeed, I have never seen him eat in the evening. He sat down with us, tilted our chairs, snuffed the candles, and intellectually treated us with the most agreeable conversation. His remembrance of Schiller was so lively, that the conversation during the latter part of the evening was devoted to him alone.

Riemer spoke of Schiller's personal appearance. "The build of his limbs, his seat in the street, all his motions," said he, "were proud; his eyes only were soft."

"Yes," said Goethe, "everything else about him was proud and majestic, only the eyes were soft. And his talent was like his outward form. He seized boldly on a great subject, and turned it this way and that, and handled it this way and that. But he saw his object, as it were, only in the outside; a quiet development from its interior was not within his province. His talent was deified eye. Then he was never decided—could never have done. He often changed a part just before a rehearsal.

"And, as he went so boldly to work, he did not take sufficient pains about *nothing*. I recollect what trouble I had with him, when he wanted to make Goethe, in 'Tell,' abruptly break an apple from the tree, and have it shot from the boy's hand. This was quite against my nature, and I urged him to give at least some notice to this barbarity, by making the boy learn to Goethe of his father's dexterity, and say that he could shoot an apple from a tree at a hundred paces. Schiller, at first, would have nothing of the sort; but at last he yielded to my arguments and intentions, and did as I advised him. I, on the other hand, by too great attention to a tree, kept my piece from the

theatre. My 'Emilia'* is nothing but a chain and this cannot succeed on the stage.

"Schiller's opinion was really made for the theatre; please be pious, and, and be a more fit stranger to say, a certain love for the theatre him from the time of the 'Rudwig,' which may him even in his prison. I still recollect perfectly in the prison, as to my 'Emilia,' where the road to him, Schiller would have made. Alas my land, moved, and led and muffled in a cloak, a effect which the sentence would produce on the. Alas was told on him, if beautiful in reverence, however, protected, and prevented the app was a great, odd name.

"Every word he became different and more difficult that I saw him, he seemed to not to have, hardly a real judgment. His letters are the marvel of him, which I perceived that they are the most excellent of his writings. He had been a man, and really, as a great man." He said, "See and read it," and he said it to me.

It was, even the letter, which he said he had taken from the 'Glocke' to 'Riemer' which exists. The old version of that time, I had given Schiller to look over. I said the to Riemer, "You are," and Goethe, "how content is his judgment, and that the hand will betray any trace of weakness." He was angry and went from me in all the fulness of his state. letter is dated the 24th of April, 1796. "See the 10th of May."

We looked at the letter by turns, and were with the clear style and the free handwriting, but with several other words of affectionate upon his friend, until it was nearly eleven o'clock departed.

"*Emilia*," 1796, 24. "If I were still superintending the theatre," said Goethe, this evening, "I would Byron's 'Dance of Yarns.' The piece is inde-

* "Die Natural's Tochter" the Natural Daughter.

would require shortening. Nothing, however, should be cut out, but the import of each scene should be taken, and expressed more concisely. The piece would thus be brought closer together, without being damaged by alterations, and it would gain a powerful effect, without any essential loss of beauty."

This opinion of Goethe's gave me a new view as to how we might proceed on the stage, in a hundred similar cases, and I was highly pleased with such a maxim, which, however, presupposes a fine intellect—nay, a poet, who understands his vocation.

We talked more about Lord Byron, and I mentioned how, in his conversations with Medwin, he had said there was something extremely difficult and unthankful in writing for the theatre. "The great point is," said Goethe, "for the poet to strike into the path which the taste and interest of the public have taken. If the direction of his talent accords with that of the public, everything is gained. Houwald hit this path with his *Bild* (picture), and hence the universal applause he received. Lord Byron, perhaps, would not have been so fortunate, inasmuch as his tendency varied from that of the public. The greatness of the poet is by no means the important matter. On the contrary, one who is little elevated above the general public may often gain the most general favour precisely on that account."

We continued to converse about Byron, and Goethe admired his extraordinary talent. "That which I call invention," said he, "I never saw in any one in the world to a greater degree than in him. His manner of looking at a dramatic knot is always better than one would anticipate."

"That," said I, "is what I feel about Shakspeare, especially when Falstaff has entangled himself in such a net of falsehood; and I ask myself what I should do to help him out; for I find that Shakspeare surpasses all my notions. That you say the name of Lord Byron, is the highest praise that can be bestowed on him. Nevertheless," I added, "the poet who takes a clear survey of beginning and end, has, by far, the advantage with the biased reader."

Goethe agreed with me, and laughed to think that Lord

Byron, who, in practical life, could never adapt himself, and never even asked about a law, finally subjected himself to the stupidest of laws—that of the *three unities*.

“He understood the purpose of this law,” said he, “no better than the rest of the world. *Comprehensibility** is the purpose, and the three unities are only so far good as they conduce to this end. If the observance of them hinders the comprehension of a work, it is foolish to treat them as laws, and to try to observe them. Even the Greeks, from whom the rule was taken, did not always follow it. In the ‘Phaeton’ of Euripides, and in other pieces, there is a change of place, and it is obvious that good representation of their subject was with them more important than blind obedience to law, which, in itself, is of no great consequence. The pieces of Shakspeare deviate, as far as possible, from the unities of time and place; but they are comprehensible—nothing more so—and on this account, the Greeks would have found no fault in them. The French poets have endeavoured to follow most rigidly the laws of the three unities, but they sin against comprehensibility, inasmuch as they solve a dramatic law, not dramatically, but by narration.”

“I call to mind the ‘Feinde’ (enemies) of Houwald. The author of this drama stood much in his own light, when, to preserve the unity of place, he sinned against comprehensibility in the first act, and altogether sacrificed what might have given greater effect to his piece to a whim, for which no one thanks him. I thought, too, on the other hand, of ‘Goetz von Berlichingen,’ which deviates as far as possible from the unity of time and place; but which, as everything is visibly developed to us, and brought before our eyes, is as truly dramatic and comprehensible as any piece in the world. I thought, too, that the unities of time and place were natural, and in accordance with the intention of the Greeks, only when a subject is so limited in its range that it can develop itself before our eyes with all its details in the given time; but tha

* We unwillingly adopt this uncouth word as the equivalent for “das Fassliche.” The American translator uses the word “illusion,” but this would be rather a result of “das Fassliche” than the thing itself.—*Trans.*

with a large action, which occurs in several places, there is no reason to be confined to one place, especially as our present stage arrangements offer no obstacle to a change of scene."

Goethe continued to talk of Lord Byron. "With that disposition," said he, "which always leads him into the illimitable, the restraint which he imposed upon himself by the observance of the three unities becomes him very well. If he had but known how to endure moral restraint also! That he could not was his ruin; and it may be aptly said, that he was destroyed by his own unbridled temperament."

"But he was too much in the dark about himself. He lived impetuously for the day, and neither knew nor thought what he was doing. Permitting everything to himself, and excusing nothing in others, he more easily put himself in a bad position, and made the world his foe. At the very beginning, he offended the most distinguished literary men by his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' To be permitted only to live after this, he was obliged to go back a step. In his succeeding works, he continued in the path of opposition and fault-finding. Church and State were not left unscathed. This reckless conduct drove him from England, and would in time have driven him from Europe also. Everywhere it was too narrow for him, and with the most perfect personal freedom he felt himself confined; the world seemed to him a prison. His Grecian expedition was the result of no voluntary resolution; his misunderstanding with the world drove him to it."

"The renunciation of what was torelatory and patriotic not only caused the personal destruction of so distinguished a man, but his revolutionary turn, and the constant mental agitation with which it was combined, did not allow his talent a fair development. Moreover, his perpetual negation and fault-finding is injurious even to his excellent works. For not only does the discontent of the poet infect the reader, but the end of all opposition is negation; and negation is nothing. If I call *bad* bad, what do I gain? But if I call *good* bad, I do a great deal of mischief. He who will work aright must never rail, must not trouble himself at all about what is ill done, but only to do well himself. For the great point is, not to pull down, but to build up, and in this humanity finds pure joy."

I was delighted with these noble words, and this valuable maxim.

"Lord Byron," continued Goethe, "is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable.

"All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection, properly so called; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men.

"Thus, Lord Byron could never attain reflection on himself, and on this account his maxims in general are not successful, as is shown by his creed, 'much money, no authority,' for much money always paralyzes authority.

"But where he will create he always succeeds; and we may truly say that with him inspiration supplies the place of reflection. He was always obliged to go on poetizing and then everything that came from the man, especially from his heart, was excellent. He produced his best things as women do pretty children, without thinking about it or knowing how it was done.

"He is a great talent, a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man than in him. In the apprehension of external objects, and a clear penetration into past situations, he is quite as great as Shakspeare. But as a pure individuality, Shakspeare is his superior. This was felt by Byron, and on this account he does not say much of Shakspeare, although he knows whole passages by heart. He would willingly have denied him altogether; for Shakspeare's cheerfulness is in his way and he feels that he is no match for it. Pope he does not deny, for he had no cause to fear him. On the contrary he mentions him, and shows him respect when he can for he knows well enough that Pope is a mere foil to himself."

Goethe seems inexhaustible on the subject of Byron, and I felt that I could not listen enough. After a few digressions, he proceeded thus:—

"His high rank as an English peer was very injurious to Byron; for every talent is oppressed by the outer world, how much more, then, when there is such high birth as

so great a fortune. A certain middle rank is much more favourable to talent, on which account we find all great artists and poets in the middle classes. Byron's predilection for the unbounded could not have been nearly so dangerous with more humble birth and smaller means. But as it was, he was able to put every fancy into practice, and this involved him in innumerable scrapes. Besides, how could one of such high rank be inspired with awe and respect by any rank whatever? He spoke out whatever he felt, and this brought him into ceaseless conflict with the world.

"It is surprising to remark," continued Goethe, "how large a portion of the life of a rich Englishman of rank is passed in duels and clopements. Lord Byron himself says that his father carried off three ladies. And let any man be a steady son after that.

"Properly speaking, he lived perpetually in a state of nature, and with his mode of existence the necessity for self-defence floated daily before his eyes. Hence his constant pistol shooting. Every moment he expected to be called out.

"He could not live alone. Hence, with all his oddities, he was very indulgent to his associates. He one evening read his fine poem on the death of Sir John Moore, and his noble friends did not know what to make of it. This did not move him, but he put it away again. As a poet, he really showed himself a lamb. Another would have commended them to the devil."

(Sup.) *Tues. Mar. 22.* Last night, soon after twelve o'clock, we were awoken by an alarm of fire; we heard cries, "The theatre is on fire!" I at once threw on my clothes, and hastened to the spot. The universal commotion was very great. Only a few hours before we had been delighted with the excellent acting of La Roche in Cumberland's "Jew," and Seidel had excited universal laughter by his good humour and jokes. And now, in the place so lately the scene of intellectual pleasures, reared the most terrible element of destruction.

The fire, which was occasioned by the heating apparatus, appears to have broken out in the pit; it soon spread to the stage and the dry lath-work of the wings, and, as it fear-

fully increased by the great quantity of combustible material, it was not long before the flames burst through the roof, and the rafters gave way.

There was no deficiency of preparations for extinguishing the fire. The building was, by degrees, surrounded by engines, which poured an immense quantity of water upon the flames. All, however, was without avail. The flames raged upwards as before, and threw up to the dark sky an inexhaustible mass of glowing sparks and burning particles of light materials, which then, with a light breeze, passed sideways over the town. The noise of the cries and calls of the men working the fire-ladders and engines was very great. All seemed determined to subdue the flames. On one side, as near to the spot as the fire allowed, stood a man in a cloak and military cap, smoking a cigar with the greatest composure. At the first glance, he appeared to be an idle spectator, but such was not the case. There were several persons to whom, in a few words, he gave commands, which were immediately executed. It was the Grand Duke Charles Augustus. He had soon seen that the building itself could not be saved; he, therefore, ordered that it should be left to fall, and that all the superfluous engines should be turned upon the neighbouring houses, which were much exposed to the fire. He appeared to think with princely resignation—

“Let *that* burn down,

With greater beauty will it rise again.”

He was not wrong. The theatre was old, by no means beautiful; and for a long time, it had ceased to be roomy enough to accommodate the annually increasing public. Nevertheless, it was lamentable to see this building thus irreparably destroyed, with which so many reminiscences of a past time, illustrious and endeared to Weimar, were connected.

I saw in beautiful eyes many tears, which flowed from its downfall. I was no less touched by the grief of a member of the orchestra. He wept for his burnt violin. As the day dawned, I saw many pale countenances. I remarked several young girls and women of high rank who had awaited the event of the fire during the whole night, and who now shivered in the cold morning air.

returned home to take a little rest, and in the course of the forenoon I called upon Goethe.

The servant told me that he was unwell and in bed. Still Goethe had me called to his side. He stretched out his hand to me. "We have all sustained a loss," said he; "what is to be done? My little Wolf came early this morning to my bed-side. He seized my hand, and looking full at me, said, 'so it is with *human things*.' What more can be said, than these words of my beloved Wolf's, with which he sought to comfort me? The theatre, the scene of my love-labours for nearly thirty years, lies in ashes. But, as Wolf says, 'so it is with human things.' I have slept but little during the night; from my front windows, I saw the flames incessantly rising towards the sky.

"You can imagine that many thoughts of old times, of my many years' exertions with Schiller, and of the progress of many a favourite pupil, passed through my mind, and not without causing some emotion. Hence, I intend wisely to remain in bed to-day."

I praised him for his forethought. Still he did not appear to me in the least weak or exhausted, but in a very pleasant and serene mood. This lying in bed seemed to me to be an old stratagem of war, which he is accustomed to adopt on any extraordinary event, when he fears a crowd of visitors.

Goethe begged me to be seated on a chair before his bed, and to stay there a little time. "I have thought much of you, and pitied you," said he. "What will you do with your evening now?"

"You know," returned I, "how passionately I love the theatre. When I came here, two years ago, I knew nothing at all, except three or four pieces which I had seen in Hanover.

"All was new to me, actors as well as pieces; and since, according to your advice, I have given myself up entirely to the impression of the subject, without much thinking or reflecting, I can say with truth, that I have, during these two winters, passed at the theatre the most pleasant and most agreeable hours that I have ever known. I was, moreover, so infatuated with the theatre, that I not only missed no performance, but also obtained admission to the

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"Schiller proceeded in the same spirit as myself. He had a great deal of intercourse with actors and actresses. He, like me, was present at every rehearsal; and after every successful performance of one of his pieces, it was his custom to invite the actors, and to spend a merry day with them. All rejoiced together at that which had succeeded, and discussed how anything might be done better next time. But even when Schiller joined us, he found both actors and the public already cultivated to a high degree; and it is not to be denied that this conduced to the rapid success of his pieces."

It gave me great pleasure to hear Goethe speak so circumstantially upon a subject which always possessed great interest for me, and which, in consequence of the misfortune of the previous night, was uppermost in my mind.

"This burning of the house," said I, "in which you and Schiller, during a long course of years, effected so much good, in some degree closes a great epoch, which will not soon return for Weimar. You must at that time have experienced great pleasure in your direction of the theatre and its extraordinary success."

"And not a little trouble and difficulty," returned Goethe with a sigh.

"It must be difficult," said I, "to keep such a many-headed being in proper order."

"A great deal," said Goethe, "may be done by severity, more by love, but most by clear discernment and impartial justice, which pays no respect to persons."

"I had to beware of two enemies, which might have been dangerous to me. The one was my passionate love of talent, which might easily have made me partial. The other will not mention, but you can guess it. At our theatre there was no want of ladies, who were beautiful and young, and who were possessed of great mental charms. I felt a passionate inclination towards many of them, and sometimes it happened that I was met half way. But I restrained myself, and said, No further! I knew my position, and also what I owed to it. I stood here, not as a private man but as chief of an establishment, the prosperity of which was of more consequence to me than a momentary gratification. If I had involved myself in any love affair, I should

have been like a compass, which cannot point right when under the influence of a magnet at its side.

"By thus keeping myself quite clear, and always remaining master of myself, I also remained master of the theatre, and I always received that proper respect, without which all authority is very soon at an end."

This confession of Goethe's deeply impressed me. I had already heard something of this kind about him from others, and I rejoiced now to hear its confirmation from his own mouth. I loved him more than ever, and took leave of him with a hearty pressure of the hand.

I returned to the scene of the fire, where flames and columns of smoke were rising from the great heap of ruins. People were still occupied in extinguishing and pulling to pieces. I found near the spot a burnt fragment of a written part. It contained passages from Goethe's "Tasso."

(Sup.) *Thurs., Mar. 24.*—I dined with Goethe. The loss of the theatre was almost the exclusive subject of conversation. Frau von Goethe and Fräulein Ulrica recalled to mind the happy hours they had enjoyed in the old house. They had been seeking some relics from amongst the rubbish, which they considered invaluable; but which were, after all, nothing but stones and burnt pieces of carpet. Still, these pieces were from the precise spot in the balcony where they had been used to sit.

"The principal thing is," said Goethe, "to recover oneself, and get in order as soon as possible. I should like the performances to recommence next week, in the palace or in the great town-hall, no matter which. Too long a pause must not be allowed, lest the public should seek some other resource for its tedious evenings."

"But," it was observed, "there are scarcely any of the decorations saved."

"There is no need of much decoration," returned Goethe. "Neither is there a necessity for great pieces. It is not even necessary to perform whole pieces at all, much less a great whole."

"The main point is, to choose something in which no great change of scene takes place. Perhaps a one act comedy, or a one act farce, or operetta. Then, perhaps, some air, duet, or finale, from a favourite opera, and you

will be very passably entertained. We have only to go tolerably through April, for in May you have the songsters of the woods.

"In the mean time," continued Goethe, "you will, during the summer months, witness the spectacle of the rearing of a new house. This fire appears to me very remarkable. I will now confess to you, that, during the long winter evenings, I have occupied myself with Courdray, in drawing the plan of a new handsome theatre suitable to Weimar.

"We had sent for the ground-plans and sections of some of the principal German theatres, and by taking what was best, and avoiding what appeared defective, we accomplished a sketch which will be worth looking at. As soon as the Grand Duke gives permission, the building may be commenced, and it is no trifle that this accident found us so wonderfully prepared."

We received this intelligence of Goethe's with great joy.

"In the old house," continued Goethe, "the nobility were accommodated in the balcony, and the servants and young artisans in the gallery. The greater number of the wealthy and genteel middle class were not well provided for; for when, at the performance of certain pieces, the students occupied the pit, these respectable persons did not know where to go. The few small boxes behind the pit and the few stalls, were not sufficient. Now we have managed much better. We have a whole tier of boxes running round the pit, and another tier, of the second rank between the balcony and the gallery.

"By these means we gain a great many places, without enlarging the house too much."

We rejoiced at this communication, and praised Goethe for his kind consideration of the theatre and the public.

In order to lend my share of assistance to the future theatre, I went, after dinner, with my friend Robert Doolander to Upper Weimar, and over a cup of coffee at the inn, began to make the libretto of an opera, after the "Issipile" of Metastasio. The first thing was to write a programme, so as to cast the piece with all the favourite singers, male and female, belonging to the Weimar theatre. This gave us great pleasure. It was almost as if we were again seated before the orchestra.

We then set to work in good earnest, and finished a great part of the first act.

(Sup.) *Sun., Mar. 27.*—I dined at Goethe's with a large party. He showed us the design for the new theatre. It was as he had told us a few days ago; the plan promised a very beautiful building, both externally and internally.

It was remarked that so pretty a theatre required beautiful decorations, and better costumes than the former one. We were also of opinion that the company had gradually become incomplete, and that some distinguished young members should be engaged, both for the drama and the opera. At the same time, we did not shut our eyes to the fact that all this would be attended with great expense, which the present state of the treasury would not allow.

"I know very well," said Goethe, "that under pretext of sparing the treasury, some insignificant persons will be engaged who will not cost much. But we cannot expect to benefit the treasury by such means.

"Nothing injures the treasury more than the endeavour to save in such essential matters. Our aim must be, to have a full house every evening. And a young singer, male or female, a clever hero, and a clever young heroine of distinguished talents and some beauty, will do much towards this end. Ay, if I still stood at the head of the direction, I would now go a step farther for the benefit of the treasury, and you would perceive that I should not be without the money required."

Goethe was asked what he meant by this.

"I would employ very simple means," returned he. "I would have performances on Sundays. I should thus have the receipts of at least forty more evenings, and it would be hard if the treasury did not thus gain ten or fifteen thousand dollars a year."

This expedient was thought very practical. It was mentioned, that to the great working-class, who are usually occupied until late at night on week days, Sunday is the only day of recreation, when they would prefer the more noble pleasures of a play to a dance, with beer, at a village inn. It was also the general opinion, that all the farmers and land-owners, as well as the officials and wealthy inhabitants of the small towns in the neighbourhood, would

Goethe's idea of permitting Sunday performances, according to the custom in all other German towns, received perfect approbation, and was greeted as a very happy one. Only a slight doubt arose, as to whether the court would approve of it.

"The court of Weimar," returned Goethe, "is too good and too wise to oppose any regulation which would conduce to the benefit of the town and an important institution. The court will certainly make the small sacrifice of altering its Sunday *soirées* to another day. But if this were not agreeable, we could find for the Sundays enough pieces which the court does not like to see, but which would suit the common people, and would fill the treasury admirably."

The conversation then turned upon actors, and much was said about the use and abuse of their powers.

"I have, during my long practice," said Goethe, "found that the main point is never to allow any play, or scarcely an opera, to be studied, unless one can look forward with some certainty to a good success for years. No one sufficiently considers the expenditure of power, which is demanded for the study of a five act play, or even an opera of equal length. Yes, my good friends, much is required before a singer has thoroughly mastered a part through all the scenes and acts, much more before the choruses go as they ought.

"I am horrified, when I hear how lightly people often give orders for the study of an opera, of the success of which they truly know nothing, and of which they have only heard through some very uncertain newspaper notice. As we, in Germany, already possess very tolerable means of travelling, and are even beginning to have diligences, I would, on the intelligence of any new opera being pro-

duced and praised, send to the spot the *Regisseur*, or some other trustworthy member of the theatre, that by his presence, at an actual representation, he might be convinced how far the highly-praised new opera was good for anything, whether our forces were sufficient for it or not. The expense of such a journey would be inconsiderable in comparison with the enormous advantage to be derived from it, and the fatal mistakes which, by these means, would be avoided.

"And then, when a good play or a good opera has once been studied, it should be represented at short intervals,—be allowed to 'run' as long as it draws, and continues at all to fill the house. The same plan would be applicable to a good old play, or a good old opera, which has, perhaps, been long laid aside, and which now requires not a little fresh study to be reproduced with success. Such a representation should be repeated at short intervals, as frequently as the public shows any interest in it. The desire always to have something new, and to see a good play or opera, which has been studied with excessive pains only once, or at the most twice, or even to allow the space of six or eight weeks to elapse between such repetitions, in which time a new study becomes necessary, is a real detriment to the theatre, and an unpardonable misuse of the talents of the performers engaged in it."

Goethe appeared to consider this matter very important, and it seemed to lie so near his heart that he became more warm than, with his calm disposition, is often the case.

"In Italy," continued Goethe, "they perform the same opera every evening for four or six weeks, and the great Italian children by no means desire any change. The polished Parisian sees the classical plays of his great poets so often that he knows them by heart, and has a practised ear for the accentuation of every syllable. Here, in Weimar, they have done me the honour to perform my 'Iphigenia' and my 'Tasso,' but how often? Scarcely once in three or four years. The public finds them tedious. Very probably. The actors are not in practice to play the pieces, and the public is not in practice to hear them. If, through more frequent repetitions, the actors entered so much into the spirit of their parts that their representation

gained life, as if it were not the result of study, and everything flowed from their own hearts, the public would, assuredly, no longer remain uninterested and unmoved.

"I really had the notion once that it was possible to form a German drama. Nay, I even fancied that I myself could contribute to it, and lay some foundation-stones for such an edifice. I wrote my 'Iphigenia' and my 'Tasso,' and thought, with a childish hope, that thus it might be brought about. But there was no emotion or excitement—all remained as it was before. If I had produced an effect, and had met with applause, I would have written a round dozen of pieces such as 'Iphigenia' and 'Tasso.' There was no deficiency of material. But, as I said, actors were wanting to represent such pieces with life and spirit, and a public was wanting to hear and receive them with sympathy."

(Sup.) *Wed., Mar. 30.*—This evening to a great tea party at Goethe's, where I found a young American, besides the young Englishmen. I also had the pleasure of seeing the Countess Julia von Egloffstein, and of conversing with her pleasantly on various subjects.

(Sup.) *Wed., April 6.*—Goethe's advice has been followed, and a performance has taken place this evening, for the first time, in the great hall of the town-house, consisting of small things and fragments, which were in accordance with the confined space and the want of decorations. The little opera, "Das Hausgesinde" (the domestic servants), went quite as well as that at the theatre. Then a favourite quartet, from the opera "Graf von Gleichen" (Count von Gleichen), by Eberwein, was received with decided approbation. Our first tenor, Herr Moltke, then sang a well-known song from "Die Zauberflöte," after which, with a pause between, the grand finale to the first act of "Don Juan" came in with powerful effect, and nobly concluded this first substitute for an evening at the theatre.

(Sup.) *Sun., April 10.*—Dined with Goethe. "I have the good news to tell you," said he, "that the Grand Duke has approved of our design for the new theatre, and that the foundation will be laid immediately."

I was very much pleased at this information.

"We had to contend with all sorts of obstacles," continued Goethe; "we are, at last, happily through them. We owe many thanks, on that account, to the Privy Councillor, Schweitzer, who, as we might have expected of him, stood true to our cause with hearty good will. The sketch is signed in the Grand Duke's own handwriting, and is to undergo no further alteration. Rejoice, then, for you will obtain a very good theatre."

(Sup.) *Thur., April 14.*—This evening at Goethe's. Since conversation upon the theatre and theatrical management were now the order of the day, I asked him upon what maxims he proceeded in the choice of a new member of the company.

"I can scarcely say," returned Goethe; "I had various modes of proceeding. If a striking reputation preceded the new actor, I let him act, and saw how he suited the others; whether his style and [manner disturbed our *ensemble*, or whether he would supply a deficiency. If, however, he was a young man who had never trodden a stage before, I first considered his personal qualities; whether he had about him anything prepossessing or attractive, and, above all things, whether he had control over himself. For an actor who possesses no self-possession, and who cannot appear before a stranger in his most favourable light, has, generally speaking, little talent. His whole profession requires continual self-denial, and a continual existence in a foreign mask.

"If his appearance and his deportment pleased me, I made him read, in order to test the power and extent of his organ, as well as the capabilities of his mind. I gave him some sublime passage from a great poet, to see whether he was capable of feeling and expressing what was really great; then something passionate and wild, to prove his power. I then went to something marked by sense and smartness, something ironical and witty, to see how he treated such things, and whether he possessed sufficient freedom. Then I gave him something in which was represented the pain of a wounded heart, the suffering of a great soul, that I might learn whether he had it in his power to express pathos.

"If he satisfied me in all these numerous particulars, I

utters. Moreover, D'Alton is, as a man, amiable and witty, while in eloquence and abundance of flowing thoughts few can equal him, and one is never tired of hearing him.

Goethe, who in his endeavours to investigate nature would willingly encompass the Great Whole, stands in a disadvantageous position to every natural philosopher* of importance who has devoted a whole life to one special object. The latter has mastered a kingdom of endless details, whilst Goethe lives more in the contemplation of great universal laws. Thence it is that Goethe, who is always upon the track of some great synthesis, but who, from the want of knowledge of single facts, lacks a confirmation of his presentiments, seizes upon, and retains with such decided love, every connection with important natural philosophers. For in them he finds what he himself wants; in them he finds that which supplies his own deficiencies. He will in a few years be eighty years old; but he is not tired of inquiries and experiments. In none of his tendencies has he come to a fixed point: he will always go on further and further. Still learning and learning. Thus he shows himself a man endowed with perpetual, imperishable youth.

These reflections were awakened to-day, by his animated conversation with D'Alton. D'Alton talked about Rodentia,† and the formation and modifications of their skeletons, and Goethe was unwearied in hearing new facts.

Wed., April 20.—Goethe showed me this evening a letter from a young student, who begs of him the plan for the second part of “Faust,” with the design of completing the work himself. In a straightforward, good-humoured, and candid tone, he freely sets forth his wishes and views, and at last, without reserve, utters his conviction that all other literary efforts of later years have been nought, but that in him a new literature is to bloom afresh.

If I met a young man who would set about continuing

* *Naturforscher*, literally “Investigator into Nature;” for the Germans do not, like us, honour experimentalists with the name of philosophers.—*Trans.*

† This word of Cuvier’s exactly corresponds to the German *Nage-thier*.—*Trans.*

Napoleon's conquest of the world, and the architecture, which attempted to extend to the Cathedral of Cologne, I should not have supposed that any thing more insane and ridiculous, than that of a young amateur, who fancies he is "Faust," merely because he has a lamp before him.

Indeed, I think it more possible that the Cathedral of Cologne than the system of "Faust" will be surpassed. For the former object admits of a comparison, estimated mathematically; it stands visibly before our eyes, and may be touched with our hands; but what the latter can do could avail for a mental, invisible work, in which it depends on the subjective possibility of the subject, and on the first discovery (apprehension) of the object, which, for its material, requires a mental life with its own laws, and for its execution, a technical skill, acquired by long practice by the practice of years.

He whose estimate of men would compare the Cathedral with certainly a very moderate estimate of the Cathedral, would be under suspicion of the truth and the skill of his estimate; he would maintain, that if Goethe had been asked to build "Faust" with only a half-hour's preparation, he would have done it, and it would be unequal to every thing that exists.

I will not dispute what is the advantage of the study, but I require the notion that the mind has not been able to do what hitherto been attained only by the hand, and that experience of many years, but I think I can show that the mind has a more numerous, now no certain in Germany, and that the mind strides over all the steps of gradual cultivation, and has little hope of future masterpiece.

"The misfortune," said Goethe, "is the nature of man, that nobody can enjoy life in peace, but that every man is a law-governor; and in art, that nobody can enjoy a work, unless he has produced, but every one wants to represent himself as one account. Again, no one thinks to be finished, but to go on, in a way by a work of poetry, but every one thinks to be the end of the thing over again. There is, besides, no one content to approach the Whole, no willingness to do anything for the sake of the Whole; but each one tries to make his own Self observable, and to exhibit it as much as possible to the world. This false tendency is shown everywhere, and

people, into the hands of the few, and the few into the hands of the many. The great question of the day is, whether the people shall be able to control the government, or whether the government shall be controlled by the people. The answer to this question is, that the people shall control the government, and the government shall be controlled by the people. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded.

"Henceforth, the people shall control the government, and the government shall be controlled by the people. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded. The people shall control the government, and the government shall be controlled by the people. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded. The people shall control the government, and the government shall be controlled by the people. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded.

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"Many people are of the opinion that the government is controlled by the people, and the people are controlled by the government. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded. The people shall control the government, and the government shall be controlled by the people. This is the principle of the American Republic, and it is the principle upon which the American Republic is founded.

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one must form himself as a particular being, seeking, however, to attain that general idea of which all mankind are constituents." *

I here thought of that passage in "Wilhelm Meister," where it is likewise said that all men, taken together, are requisite to constitute humanity, and that we are only so far worthy of esteem as we know how to appreciate.

I thought, too, of the "Wanderjahre," where Jarno advises each man to learn only one trade, and says that this is the time for one's blindness, and that is, for the ungratulated who understands this, and, in that spirit, works for himself and others.

Then comes the question, what occupation shall a man choose, that he may neither overdo nor neglect his work, nor do too little?

He whose business it is to create a new world, to judge, to guide others, should endeavour to attain the best insight into many departments. This insight, however, statesmen cannot be too much indebted to his culture; for many-sidedness belongs to his craft.

The poet, too, should rise, and survey the world as a whole, for his subject is the whole world, which he has to handle and to express.

However, the poet should not be so much occupied, he content himself with reflecting the world, and let it not be allowed the actor to bring it before our eyes, personally exhibiting himself.

Insight and practical activity are two distinct ideas, and we ought to reflect that *insight*, when we reduce it to practice, is something very great and difficult, and that mastery in it requires a life.

Thus Goethe strove for insight but, being obliged, he has practically confined himself to one thing only. Only one art has he practised, and that in a masterly style, viz. the art of writing German (*Deutsch zu schreiben*). That the matter which he uttered is of a many-sided nature is another affair.

Culture is likewise to be distinguished from practical ne-

* *Den Begriff zu erkennen suchen, und alle aus ihm zu machen.* The word "Begriff" (rendered not quite correctly "idea") is here used in the sense of the Hegelmacherei of Fichte.

ty. Thus it belongs to the cultivation of the painter's eye should be practised for the special purpose of attaining to it. And if Goethe calls his painter's eye for painting a false one, it was still on purpose that he called it a painter's eye.

"The objectivity of my poetry," said Goethe, "has attracted to this great attention and desire for it. I have thought highly to prize the knowledge which I have gained in this way."

But we must take care not to place the picture of nature too far off.

"The investigation into nature," said Goethe, "has no danger of this, because we are not human beings in culture; for this is really required for the adequate knowledge of nature."

But, on the other hand, every one of us must strive to attain to one-sidedness and narrowness, with respect to the knowledge which is indispensable to his own art or art.

A poet who writes for the stage must have a knowledge of nature, that he may weigh the measure at his command, know generally what is to be done, and what is to be done; the opera-composer, in like manner, should have insight into poetry, that he may know how to distinguish the bad from the good, and to give it the something imperishable.

Carl Maria von Weber, the composer of *Der Freischütz*, said to me:

"This was a bad mistake of mine, that I have not done so much study of the nature of the opera-composer, as he has of mine."

Thus, too, the painter should have a knowledge of poetry; for it belongs to his duty to know what is to be painted, and what to leave unpainted.

But when all is said," observed Goethe, "there is always a limit and a date set."

Accordingly, he has, ever since I have known him, constantly endeavoured to give and to sustain his customers, and to concentrate his attention and powers. If I told him inclination to penetrate the secrets of a naturalist, he always refused me to let me alone, and to return

myself to poetry for the present. If I wished to read a book which he thought would not advance me in my present pursuits, he always advised me to let it alone, saying that it was of no practical use to me.

"I myself," said he one day, "have spent too much time on things which did not belong to my proper department. When I reflect what Lopez de Vega accomplished, the number of my poetical productions seems very small. I should have kept more to my own trade."

"If I had not busied myself so much with stones," said he another time, "but had spent my time on something better, I might have won the finest ornament of diamonds."

For the same cause he esteems and praises his friend Meyer for having devoted his whole life exclusively to the study of art, and thus having obtained beyond a doubt the highest degree of penetration in his department.

"I also grew up with this tendency," said Goethe, "and I passed almost half my life in the contemplation and study of works of art, but in a certain respect I am not on a par with Meyer. I, therefore, never venture to show him a new picture at once, but first see how far I can get on with it myself. When I think I am fully acquainted both with its beauties and defects I show it to Meyer, who sees far more sharply into the matter, and who, in many respects, gives quite new lights. Thus I am ever convinced anew how much is needed to be thoroughly great in any one thing. In Meyer lies an insight into art belonging to thousands of years."

Why, then, it may be asked, if Goethe was so thoroughly persuaded that one man can only do one thing well, did he employ his life in such extremely various directions?

I answer that, if Goethe now came into the world, and found the literary and scientific endeavours of his native country at the height which they have now, chiefly through him, attained, he certainly would find no occasion for such various tendencies, but would simply confine himself to a single department.

Thus, it was not only in his nature to look in every direction, and to make himself clear about earthly things, but it was needful for his time that he should speak out what he had observed.

understand me, and puts a false construction on words.

"I have devoted my whole life to the people and to their improvement, and why should I not also found a drama? But here in Weimar, in this small capital, which, as people jokingly say, has ten thousand poets and a few inhabitants, how can we talk about the people, much more a theatre for the people? Weimar will doubtless become, at some future time, a great city; but we must wait some centuries before the people of Weimar will form a mass sufficient to be able to found and support a drama."

The horses were now put to, and we drove to the large garden. The evening was calm and mild, rather sultry, and large clouds appeared gathering in tempestuous masses. We walked up and down the dry gravel path. Goethe quietly by my side, apparently agitated by various thoughts. Meanwhile, I listened to the notes of the blue bird and thrush, who, upon the tops of the still leafless trees, beyond the Elm, sang against the gathering tempest.

Goethe cast his glances around, now towards the clouds, now upon the green which was bursting forth everywhere on the sides of the path and on the meadows, as well as among the bushes and hedges. "A warm thunder-shower, with the evening promises," said he, "and spring will again appear in all her splendour and abundance."

In the mean time the clouds became more threatening, a low peal of thunder was heard, some drops of rain also fell, and Goethe thought it advisable to drive back into the town. "If you have no engagement," said he, as he alighted at his dwelling, "go upstairs, and spend an hour or so with me." This I did with great pleasure.

Zelter's letter still lay upon the table. "It is strangely very strange," said Goethe, "how easily one falls into a false position with respect to public opinion. I do not know that I ever joined in any way against the people; it is now settled, once for all, that I am no friend to the people. I am, indeed, no friend to the revolutionary movement whose object is robbery, murder, and destruction, and who, behind the mask of public welfare, have their eyes only upon the meanest egotistical aims. I am no friend to such a people, any more than I am a friend of a Louis XV.

hate every violent overthrow, because as much good is destroyed as is gained by it. I hate those who achieve it, as well as those who give cause for it. But am I therefore no friend to the people? Does any right-minded man think otherwise?

"You know how greatly I rejoice at every improvement, of which the future gives us some prospect. But, as I said, all violent transitions are revolting to my mind, for they are not conformable to nature.

"I am a friend to plants; I love the rose as the most perfect flower which our German nature can produce; but I am not fool enough to desire that my garden should produce them now, at the end of April. I am now satisfied if I now find the first green leaves, satisfied if I see how one leaf after another is formed upon the stem, from week to week; I am pleased when, in May, I perceive the buds, and am happy when, at last, in June, the rose itself appears in all its splendour and all its fragrance. If any one cannot wait, let him go to the hothouses.

"It is farther said that I am a servant, a slave to princes, as if that were saying anything. Do I then serve a tyrant—a despot? Do I serve one who lives at the cost of the people, only for his own pleasures? Such princes and such times lie, God be praised, far behind us. I have been intimately connected with the Grand Duke for half a century, and have, during half a century striven and worked with him; but I should speak falsely if I were to say that I have known a single day in which the Grand Duke has not thought of doing and executing something tending to the benefit of the land, and fitted to improve the condition of individuals. As for himself personally, what has he from his princely station but toil and trouble? Is his dwelling, his apparel, or his table better appointed than that of any wealthy private man? Only go into our seaport towns, and you will find the kitchen and cellar of any considerable merchant better appointed than his.

"This autumn," continued Goethe, "we are going to celebrate the day on which the Grand Duke will have governed for fifty years. But when I consider it rightly—this government of his—what was it but a continual servitude? What has it been but a servitude in the attain-

"The Grand Duke," said Goethe, "disclosed to me his opinion, that a theatre need not be of architectural magnificence, which could not be contradicted. He further said, that it was nothing but a house for the purpose of getting money. This view appears at first sight rather material; but rightly considered, it is not without a higher purport. For if a theatre is not only to pay its expenses, but is, besides, to make and save money, everything about it must be excellent. It must have the best management at its head; the actors must be of the best; and good pieces must continually be performed, that the attractive power required to draw a full house every evening may never cease. But that is saying a great deal in a few words—almost what is impossible."

"The Grand Duke's view," said I, "of making the theatre gain money appears to be very practical, since it implies a necessity of remaining continually on a summit of excellence."

"Even Shakspeare and Molière," returned Goethe, "had no other view. Both of them wished, above all things, to make money by their theatres. In order to attain this, their principal aim, they necessarily strove that everything should be as good as possible, and that, besides good old plays, there should be some clever novelty to please and attract. The prohibition of 'Tartuffe' was a thunderbolt to Molière; but not so much for the poet as for the director Molière, who had to consider the welfare of an important troupe, and to find some means to procure bread for himself and his actors."

"Nothing," continued Goethe, "is more dangerous to the well-being of a theatre than when the director is so placed, that a greater or less receipt at the treasury does not affect him personally, and he can live on in careless security, knowing that, however the receipts at the treasury may fail in the course of the year, at the end of that time he will be able to indemnify himself from another source. It is a property of human nature soon to relax when not impelled by personal advantage or disadvantage. Now, it is not desirable that a theatre, in such a town as Weimar, should support itself, and that no contribution from the Prince's treasury should be necessary. But

moist clay wall; they shot quickly one after another, and left the arrows sticking in. And it was not seldom that out of fifteen arrows five struck the centre, which was about the size of a dollar, while the rest were very near it. When all had shot, each went and drew his arrow out of the soft wall, and the game went on afresh. I was then so enraptured with this archery, that I thought it would be a great thing to introduce it into Germany, and I was so stupid as to deem it possible. I often bargained for a bow, but there were none to be had under twenty francs, and how could a poor Jäger like myself scrape together so much money? I therefore confined myself to an arrow, as the most important and most elaborate article; and bought one at a manufactory at Brussels for a franc, which I brought home, together with a drawing, as my only prize of victory."

"That is just like you," said Goethe. "But do not think that you can make anything natural and beautiful popular. A long time, and a confounded deal of work, will be requisite, at any rate. But I can easily imagine that this Brabant archery is very beautiful. Our German amusements in the skittle-ground appear rough and ordinary, in comparison with it, and savour strongly of the Philistine."*

"The beauty of archery," returned I, "is that it displays the body symmetrically, and exercises the powers in equal proportion. There is the left arm, which holds the bow, stiff, strong, and firm; there is the right, which draws the string with the arrow, and must be no less powerful. At the same time both the feet and the thighs are planted strongly, to form a firm basis for the upper part of the body. The eye directed to the aim, and the muscles of the neck are all in full tension and activity; and then the feeling of joy, when the arrow darts whizzing from the bow, and pierces the desired mark! I know no bodily exercise that can be at all compared to it."

"It would be very well suited to our gymnastic institutions," answered Goethe. "And I should not wonder if, in twenty years, we were to have skilful archers by

* "Philister," the academical slang corresponding to the English "snob."—*Trans.*

housands in Germany. Generally speaking, it is not to be done with a full-grown man, but with a child or in mental pursuits, in matters of taste and character. Be clever enough to begin with the child, and you may succeed."

"But our German teachers of gymnastics," returned I, "do not understand the use of bows and arrows." "Well," said Goethe, "several gymnastics schools in Flanders combine, and a skilful archer might be found in Flanders or Brabant. Or they might send some of the grown young gymnasts to Brabant, that they might be trained to good archers, and learn how to carve and make arrows. These young men might even visit some of our gymnastic institutions as travelling teachers, and make a sojourn for a time, now with one schoolmaster, and now with another."

"I have," continued Goethe, "no objection to the gymnastic exercises. On the contrary, I was sorry that no politics crept into them, so that the authorities were obliged to restrain them, or even to forbid and prohibit."

"By this means we have thrown away the wood for the apple," said I. "But I hope that the gymnastic institutions will be revived; for our German youths need them, especially the students, who, with a great deal of mental exertion, and actual exertion, are without any physical exertion, and therefore without any necessary power of endurance." "Tell me something more about your bow and arrow," said he; "you have really brought an arrow with you, have you not? I should like to see it."

"It has been lost long ago," returned I, "but I considered it so well, that I succeeded in replicating it, and made by a dozen instead of one. It was not quite so easy as I expected, and I made many failures, but by that very means I learned a great deal. The first thing to be attended to was the wood; I had to see that it was straight, and not bent in a short time; then that it was light and strong, and not to split in striking against a hard substance. In the experiments with the wood of the poplar, I was literally, "thrown away the child with the bath" (das Kind m. Bade verschüttet)—a German proverbial expression, which means

the pine, and then of the birch ; but they were all deficient in one quality or another, and were not such as they ought to be. I then made experiments with the wood of a lime-tree from a slender straight stem, and I found exactly what I wished for and had sought. Such a shaft was light, straight, and strong, on account of its fine fibres. The next thing to be done was to furnish the lower end with a tip of horn ; but it soon became evident that the horn was not fit for the purpose, and that it must be cut out of the kernel, in order that it might not shatter on being shot against any hard substance. But the most difficult part was yet to do, namely, the feathering of the arrow. How I bungled, and what failures I met with before I succeeded in bringing it to any perfection !”

“The feathers are not let into the shaft, but glued on, are they not ?” said Goethe.

“They are glued on,” returned I ; “but this must be done so strongly and so neatly done, that they shall appear as if they were a part of the shaft, and had grown from it. It is not a matter of indifference what glue is used. I have found that isinglass, steeped in water for some hours, and then with some spirit added, dissolved in a jelly over a gentle charcoal fire, makes the best glue. Neither are all feathers serviceable alike. The feathers drawn from the wings of all great birds are indeed good, but I have found the red feathers from the wings of a peacock, the large feathers of the turkey-cock, and particularly the strong and splendid ones of the eagle and the bustard, the best of any.”

“I hear all this with great interest,” said Goethe. “One who did not know you, would scarcely believe that your tendencies were so lively. But tell me now, how can you use a bow ?”

“I made some myself,” returned I. “But here also I bungled dreadfully at first. I consulted cabinet-makers and cartwrights. I tried all the kinds of wood in the place, and at last arrived at excellent results. In the choice of woods, I had to take care that the bow should bend easily, that it should spring back strongly and quickly, and that its elasticity should last. I made my first experiment with ash, with a branchless stem of about

growth, and of the thickness of a needle, and of the grain. But in working, I came to the heart, which was not so good for my purpose, as the wood about it, and I was obliged to rise a grain. I was advised to take a wedge, and to drive it strong enough to *schluchten* into four pieces. "What is *schluchten*," asked Goethe, "what is that?" "It is a technical term used by cartwrights," replied I, "and it means the same as *spalten* (to split), and the wedge is driven quite through the stem, from one end to the other. Now, if the stem grows straight, I can cut it straight in a straight line, the pieces obtained by splitting will be straight and fit for a bow. But if the stem is curved, the pieces will have a curved, cracked edge, and will be unfit for a bow, since the wedge follows the curve, and what would be the result of *slicing* such a stem into four parts? One could thus obtain straight pieces, and use."

"I might," returned I, "cut through a stem in which the fibres were twisted, and this would make the pieces unfit for a bow."

"I understand," said Goethe; "a bow in which the fibres were cut through would break. But go on, your subject interests me."

"I therefore made," said I, "my second bow with a piece of split ash. There were no fibres divided, and the bow was strong and firm; but I felt it was hard, instead of easy to bend. I then took a piece of a seedling ash," said I, "and found that it is always a very stiff wood; but take a piece of a young ash, and you will find it better. On this subject I learned that there is a great difference in the quality of the different kinds of wood, a great deal depending upon the soil and on which they grow. I learned that the wood of the Teutoburg is of little value as timber, that the wood of the Harz, the wood in the neighbourhood of Nuremberg, is of considerable strength, on account of which the cartwrights have great confidence in the cart frames made of it."

In my subsequent experiment, I found that the wood of a tree that all wood which grows upon the northern side of a declivity is stronger, and of more even grain than that which grows on the southern side. This is a very important

hensible. For a young tree which grows on the south side of a cliff, must seek light and sun from above, on which account, bending for the sun, it continually struggles upwards, and draws the fibres in a perpendicular direction. Besides, a shady situation is favourable to the formation of a finer fibre, which is very strikingly apparent in those trees which grow in such a situation, that the south side is constantly exposed to the sun, whilst the north side is always in the shade. If such a stem were sawn in pieces before us, we should remark that the pith of the heart was by no means in the centre, but very near on one side. And this eccentricity of the heart arises from the circumstance that the yearly rings of the south become, through the constant influence of the sun, more developed more strongly, and are therefore broader than those on the shady north side. Hence cabinet-makers and cartwrights, when they require a strong fine wood, choose in preference the more finely developed north side of the stem, which they call the winter side, and in which they have great confidence."

"You can imagine," said Goethe, "that your observations are very interesting to me, who have, for half a life, occupied myself with the growth of plants and trees. But continue your relation. You probably made the bow from a tough ash?"

"I did so," returned I, "and I took a well split piece from the winter side, in which I found a tolerably fine fibre. The bow was also easy to bend, and very elastic. But after it had been in use some months, a very considerable curve showed itself, and it was evident that elasticity did not continue. I then made experiments with the stem of a young oak, which was moreover a perfect good wood; but I soon found the same fault in this. I then tried the stem of a walnut tree, which was better, and at last the stem of a fine-leaved maple—a *Mashou* as it is called, which was the best, and which left nothing to desire."

"I know the wood," returned Goethe; "it is often found in hedges. I can imagine that it is good. But I have seldom found a young stem without knots; and to make a bow, do you not require wood quite free from them?"

"A young stem," returned I, "is indeed not without knots; but when one rears it to a tree, the knots are taken off, or if it grow in a thicket, they disappear in time of their own accord. Now, if a stem is about two or three inches in diameter when the knots are removed, and if it is allowed to increase yearly, and to form new wood on the outside, at the expiration of fifty or eighty years, the knotty inner part will be encased in about six inches of sound wood, free from knots. Such a stem will present a very smooth exterior; but one cannot tell what imperfections it has within. We shall, therefore, at all events, be safe with a plank sawn from such a stem, if we keep to the outside, and cut a few inches from that piece which is immediately under the bark, that is to say, the *splint* and what follows, as this is always the youngest and toughest wood, and the most suitable for a bow."

"I thought," said Goethe, "that the wood for a bow should not be sawn, but must be split, or as you call it *Geschlachtet*."

"Certainly, when it can be split," returned I. "Ash, oak, and walnut may be split, because they are woods of a coarse fibre. But not the *Masholder*. For it is a wood of such a fine interwoven fibre, that it will not divide according to the course of the fibres, but splits quite against the natural grain. The wood of the *Masholder* must therefore be divided with the saw, and that without endangering the strength of the bow."

"Humph! Humph!" said Goethe. "You have acquired considerable knowledge through your bow mania. And it is that lively kind of knowledge which is attained only in a practical way. But that is the advantage of a passionate liking for any pursuit, that it carries one to the very bottom of the subject. Besides, seeking and blundering are good, for it is by seeking and blundering that we learn. And, indeed, one learns not merely the thing itself, but everything connected with it. What should I have known of plants and colours, if my theory had been handed down to me ready made, and I had learned it by heart? But from the very circumstance that I was obliged to seek and find everything for myself, and occasionally to make mistakes, I can say that I know

something of both these subjects, and more than stuff paper. But tell me something more about your bow, have seen some Scotch ones, which were quite straight to the point, and others, the points of which were curved. Which do you regard as the best?"

"I consider," returned I, "that the elasticity is more greater when the ends of the bow are curved backwards. At first I made them straight, because I did not understand how to bend the ends. But when I had learned to do it, I bent the ends, and I find that the bow not have more beautiful appearance, but also that it acquires more power."

"The curves made by heat, are they not?" Goethe.

"Yes; by moist heat," returned I. "When the bow is far finished that the elasticity is equally distributed, that it is nowhere stronger or weaker than it ought to be, I place one end of it in hot water, about six or eight inches deep, and let it boil for about an hour. I turn this often round, while it is hot, between two sheets of the warm paper of which has the form of curves that I wish to give to my bow. In this state pressed, I let it remain at least a day and a night, that may be perfectly dry, and I then proceed with the other end in the same manner. Parts so treated are as intractable as if they had grown in such a curve."

"What do you think?" said Goethe, with a mysterious laugh. "I believe I have something for you, which is not be unacceptable. Suppose we went down together and I were to put a genuine Baschkir bow* in your hands."

"A Baschkir bow!" exclaimed I, full of animation "and a genuine one?"

"Yes, and follow, a genuine one," said Goethe. "Come along." We went down into the garden. Goethe opened the under chamber of a small out-house, the tables and walls of which appeared crammed with rarities and collection of every description. I caught only a transient glance at these treasures; my eyes sought the bow. "Here it is," said Goethe; "he took it from a corner, out of a ha-

* The Baschkiren are a Tartar race subject to Russia. - *Trans.*

of all sorts of strange implements. I see it is in the same condition as when it was presented to me in the year 1814, by a Baschkir chief. Now, what do you say?"

I was delighted to hold the precious weapon in my hands. It appeared quite uninjured, and even the string appeared perfectly serviceable. I tried it in my hands, and found that it was still tolerably elastic. "It is a good bow," said I. "The form especially pleases me, and for the future it shall serve me as a model."

"Of what wood is it made, do you think?"

"It is, as you see, so covered with birch bark," replied I, "that very little of the wood is visible, and only the curved ends remain exposed. Even these are so embrowned by time, that one cannot well distinguish what the wood is. At the first glance, it looks like young oak, and then again like nut tree. I think that it is nut tree, or a wood that resembles it. Maple or masholder it is not. It is a wood of coarser fibre; besides, I observe signs of its having been split (*geschlucht*)."

"Suppose you were to try it now," said Goethe. "Here you have an arrow. But be cautious with the iron point, it may be poisoned."

We went again into the garden, and I bent the bow. "Now, where will you shoot?" said Goethe. "Into the air at first, I think," said I. "Go on, then," said Goethe. I shot up towards the sunny clouds in the blue sky. The arrow supported itself well, then turned round, came whizzing downwards, and stuck into the ground. "Now let me try," said Goethe. I was pleased that he, too, was going to shoot. I gave him the bow, and fetched the arrow.

Goethe placed the notch of the arrow upon the string, and held the bow right, but was some time before he could manage it properly. He now aimed upwards, and drew the string. There he stood like an Apollo, with imperishable youth of soul, although old in body. The arrow only attained a very moderate height, and then fell to the ground. I ran and fetched the arrow. "Once more," said Goethe. He now took aim along the gravel path of the garden. The arrow supported itself about thirty paces tolerably well, then fell, and whizzed along upon the

appeared no equally great strength, still, it is not, indeed, a matter difficult to explain, and we may have our own conjectures, and opinions, to a certain degree.

"Man is a simple being. And how variable, how unfaithful he may be, the eye of his nature may be run through.

"If the same circumstances had been the case with poor Germans, for what I know, they might have said, I say, all these or they are false, or they are not, or they play, there might easily have been a sixth, seventh, fifth, and sixth tragedy."

"But with the Greeks and Romans, the great productions—for each of the three great poets, Homer, Virgil, hundred, or nearly a hundred poems, and the great objects of Homer, and the great objects of Virgil, and they treated these or have treated with such a variety of exciting works, I say, one can well imagine that the subjects were exhausted, and that any poet who followed the three great ones would be puzzled how to proceed.

"And, indeed, for what purpose should he write? Was there not, after all, enough for a time? And were not the productions of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Æuripides* of that kind and of that depth, that they could be read, seen, and again without being tired of the spectacle?—Even the few noble fragments which have come down to us are no commonplace and commonplace, and we poor Europeans have enjoyed them for centuries, and shall continue to enjoy them for centuries."

Then, May 12. "On the 11th, with a number of members of *Memoria*. 'I have a very pleasant thing to say to you,' when I have no will. He is then sitting, and is great, and cheerful, and has no more matter to say. It is certainly to be lamented that we have no more of him, but that little is invaluable, and highly instructive to gifted men.

"The great point is, that he is a man who would learn should be congenial to our nature. Now, *Calderon*, for instance, great as he is, and much as *Richards* has exerted no influence over me, I say, for all. But he

would have been dangerous to Schiller, he would have led him astray; and hence it is fortunate that Calderon was not generally known in Germany till after Schiller's death. Calderon is infinitely great in the poetical and theatrical; Schiller, on the contrary, far more sound, earnest, and great in his intentions, and it would have been a pity if he had lost any of the stimulus which, after all, attaining the greatness of Calderon in the respects."

We spoke of *Molière*. "*Molière*," said Goethe, "is so great, that one is a finished man every time one reads him. He is a man by himself; his pieces, whether on tragedy; they are apprehensive; and no one has the courage to imitate them. His '*Miser*,' where the vice destroys all the natural piety between father and son, is especially great, and in a high sense tragic. But when, in a German paraphrase, the son is changed into a relative, the whole is weakened, and loses its significance. They failed to show the vice in its true nature, as he did; but what is a tragedy there, or indeed anywhere, except what is not possible?"

"I read some pieces of *Molière* every year, but at a great time to time, I contemplate the character of the great Italian master. For we little ones are unable to retain the greatness of such things, and this is our loss; we must therefore return to them from time to time, and renew our impressions."

"People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. And, after all, what can we call our own except energy, strength, and will? If I could give up one out of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favour."

"However, the time of life in which we are subjected to a new and important personal influence, is not so much a matter of indifference. That Lessing, Winckelmann, and Kant were older than I, and that the first two acted upon my youth, the latter on my advanced age, this circumstance was for me very important. Again, that Schiller was so much younger than I, and engaged in his freshest strivings, just as I began to be weary of the world—just, too, as the brothers and Hamann and

picture space; it is not, however, the object alone which produces this effect, but it is the manner in which we see it, with that which is being exhibited, and so it, all of which, contributes to that effect.

"Thus, during a walk, I may meet with an oak, the picturesque effect of which strikes me. But if I represent it alone, it will perhaps not so clearly appear to me as it did, because that is wanting which contributed to and enhanced the picturesque effect in nature. Thus, too, a wood may appear beautiful through the influence of one particular sky, one particular light, and one particular situation of the sun. But if I omit all these in my drawing, it will perhaps appear without any force, and as something indifferent to which the proper charm is wanting.

"Further, there is in nature nothing beautiful which is not produced completely as far as conformity with the laws of nature. In order that that truth of nature may also appear true in the picture, it must be accounted for by the introduction of the influential circumstances.

"I find by a brook well-wooded shores, the parts of which exposed to the air are in a picturesque manner covered with green moss. Now it is not alone the moisture of the water which has caused this formation of moss, but, perhaps a northerly aspect, or the shade of the trees and bushes, have cooperated in this formation at this part of the brook. If I omit these influential causes in my picture, it will be without truth, and without the proper convincing power.

"Thus, the situation of a tree, the kind of soil beneath it, and other trees behind and beside it, have a great influence on its formation. An oak which stands exposed to the wind on the western summit of a rocky hill, will require quite a different form from that of one which grows below on the moist ground of a sheltered valley. Both may be beautiful in their kind, but they will have a very different character, and can, therefore, in an artistically conceived landscape, only be used for such a situation as they occupied in nature. And therefore the delineation of surrounding objects, by which any particular situation is expressed, is of high importance to the artist. On the other hand, it would be foolish to attempt to represent

particularly to Poussin and Claude Lorraine, and, above all, to study the works of these two great men, that he might plainly see how they regarded nature, and used her for the expression of their artistical views and feelings.

"Preller is an important talent, and I have no fear of him. He appears to me, besides, of a very earnest character. I am almost certain that he will rather incline to Poussin than to Claude Lorraine; still I have particularly recommended him to study the latter—and not without reason; for it is with the cultivation of an artist as with the cultivation of every other talent. Our strong points, to a certain extent, develop themselves; but those germs of our nature which are not in daily exercise, and are therefore less powerful, need particular care, in order that they may become strong likewise.

"So may a young singer, as I have often said, possess certain natural tones which are very excellent, and which leave nothing to desire; while other tones in his voice may be found less strong, clear, and full. But even these he must by constant exercise seek to bring to equal perfection with the others.

"I am certain that Preller will one day succeed admirably in the solemn, the grand, and perhaps also the wild. Whether he will be equally happy in the cheerful, the graceful, and the lovely, is another question; and therefore have I especially recommended to him Claude Lorraine, in order that, by study, he may acquire that which does not lie in the actual tendency of his nature.

"There is one thing more to which I called his attention. I have seen many of his studies from nature: they were excellent, and executed with great energy and life; but they were all isolated objects, of which little can afterwards be made when one comes to inventions of one's own. I have now advised him never for the future to delineate an isolated object, such as single trees, single heaps of stones, or single cottages, but always to add a background and some surrounding objects.

"And for the following reasons. In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it, and over it. A single object, I grant, may strike us as particularly

all those prosaic casualties which have had a terrible influence upon the form of the poem, and have given it a picturesque effect for the sake of the form."

"I have inquired of the old man, however, who had lent to Preller, and I am certain that the poem will not and thrive in him—a born reader!"

Sat., June 11.—Today Goethe told us a great deal about Major Parry's book on Lord Byron, which was an unqualified praise, and remarked that the English account appeared a far more complete and more clear as to him, than the French one, which was the one which had been written about him.

"Major Parry," continued Goethe, "is a noble elevated man, a noble mind, so fully acquainted with, and so perfectly to have described, the character of Byron, that in his book his plenitude of power is evident. He is an old Greek, of a Plutarch. 'There is no doubt that Parry,' 'was destitute of all those virtues which are necessary to a class, and which he may properly be called a member of; his birth, education, and his country, his habits, his considerable judgements are in fact, the very opposite of those which are ordinarily pity him for. They are not his virtues, although they have rendered possible the great work which he has done; do not reflect that I am not speaking of the great virtues of which they are far removed, but of the virtues you like that?' " said Goethe, "that is, the virtues of a thing every day."

"I am glad," said I, "to hear of a person, however, by which all the petty considerations of the world are higher than themselves, and which are not to be brought down."

We then spoke of subjects which are made a subject of meditation to poetry, and as to how far this is to be done, we may be more favourable to the poet than to the philosopher.

"The poet," said Goethe, "shall have the Universal, and he should, if there be anything which can represent the Universal. The fact is that the poet is not for poetry, because it is something which is not universal, and therefore universal, which represents the Universal again. The French history, on the contrary, is not for poetry, as it represents not only the Universal, but the Universal."

The literature of the French, so far as it is founded on that era, stands as something of merely particular interest, which must grow old with time.

"The present era of French literature," said Goethe afterwards, "cannot be judged fairly. The German influence causes a great fermentation there, and we probably shall not know for twenty years what the result will be."

We then talked of the æsthetic writers, who labour to express the nature of poetry and the poet in abstract definitions, without arriving at any clear result.

"What need of such definition?" said Goethe. "Lively feeling of situations, and power to express them, make the poet."

Well, but, I said, I found Goethe in a very elevated mood this evening, and had the pleasure of hearing from him many significant remarks. We talked about the state of the present literature, when Goethe expressed himself as follows:

"Deficiency of character in individual investigators and writers in," he said, "the source of all the evils of our present literature.

"In criticism, especially, this defect produces mischief to the world, for it either diffuses the false instead of the true, or by a pitiful truth deprives us of something great, that would be better.

"Till lately, the world believed in the heroism of a Lancelot, of a Muslim Gens d'Armes, and suffered itself, by this belief, to be warmed and inspired. But now comes your historical criticism, and says that these persons never lived, but are to be regarded as fables and dreams, divined by the great mind of the Romans. What are we to do with as pitiful a truth? If the Romans were great enough to invent such stories, we should at least be great enough to believe them.

"Till lately, I was always pleased with a great fact in the thirteenth century, when the Emperor Frederic the Second was at variance with the Pope, and the north of Germany was open to all sorts of hostile attacks. Asante hordes had actually penetrated as far as Silesia, when the Duke of Legnitz terrified them by one great defeat.

They then turned to Monvel, but were here defied Count Stendrac. "The cavalier has had on this been living in my heart as the great architect of a new nation. But now we are in a dead condition, and that the only way possible of their doing quite much the. A little more was already needed, and was returned of its own accord. That is a great nation crippled and deformed, which comes to me in a sudden."

After the researches on historical critics, Goethe another class of seekers and literary men.

"I could never," said he, "have known so wretched men are, and how little they care for religion, if I had not tested them by my scientific. Thus I saw that most men only care for science as they get a living by it, and that they worship even when it offers them a substitute."

"In fact, that it is no better. Then, too, his need examine here for the true and good, and if different, are very many phenomena. One nation and religion, another because he is by the church of educated in nature. Thus, even so, I felt that they would like deliverance, with the world, so that even they might be of importance to it. Such can see, and the prominent individuals are a lot."

"I have great talents, and would willingly I might have done much for his country. But his character has deprived the world of such great and himself of the esteem of the country."

"We want a man like Lesclapart. For how was he except in character, in firmness. There are none as clever and as cultivated, but where is such character."

"Many are full of *esprit* and knowledge, but it is also full of vanity; and that they may shine with the short-sighted multitude, they have no other deficiency - nothing is sacred to them."

"Madame de Genlis was therefore perfectly right she declaimed against the freedom and profane Voltaire. Clever as they all may be, the world has no profit from them; they afford a foundation for it. Nay, they have been of the greatest injury, and

have confused men, and robbed them of their needful support.

"After all, what do we know, and how far can we go with all our wit ?

"Man is born not to solve the problems of the universe, but to find out where the problem begins, and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible.

"His faculties are not sufficient to measure the actions of the universe; and an attempt to explain the outer world by reason is, with his narrow point of view, but a vain endeavour. The reason of man and the reason of the Deity are two very different things.

"If we grant freedom to man, there is an end to the omniscience of God; for if the Divinity knows how I shall act, I must act to purpose. I give this merely as a sign how little we know, and to show that it is not good to meddle with divine mysteries.

"Moreover, we should only utter higher maxims so far as they can benefit the world. The rest we should keep within ourselves, and they will diffuse over our actions a lustre like the mild radiance of a hidden sun."

Sun., Dec. 25. I went to Goethe this evening at six o'clock. I found him alone, and passed with him some delightful hours.

"My mind," said he, "has of late been burdened by many things. So much good has been flowing in to me on all sides, that the mere ceremony of returning thanks has prevented me from having any practical life. The privileges respecting the publication of my works have been gradually coming in from the different courts; and as the position was different in each case, each required a different answer. Then came the proposals of innumerable booksellers, which also had to be considered, acted upon, and answered. Then my Jubilee has brought me such thousand-fold attentions, that I have not yet got through with my letters of acknowledgment. I cannot be content with hollow generalities, but wish to say something appropriate to every one. Now I am gradually becoming free, and feel again disposed for conversation.

"I have of late made an observation, which I will impart to you.

"Everything we do here is right, that is, all right and excellent, as far as it goes. On the contrary to what I feel, some of the places are placed. Some of these things I do not like, because of their position, which I do not understand very well. I do not see. But as we cannot do anything to alter them, I had not much to say about them. I do not like a greater one. Still, I do not see any harm in it, and hence was not sure that it would do any harm to the work without interfering with it."

I was struck by this speech, which seemed to me

I then turned the conversation to the subject of our work, we came to the clergy, "Alexis and I say."

"In this point," said G. S. the "people have blamed the clergy, perhaps not entirely, but they would have liked clergy to be gentler and more friendly, without that out of fatherly; but I do not see that they were really doing any harm, especially as the effect of the clergy would be to make the people more respectful and obedient. I say all this, however, because I am often of his opinion, and I am sure that the clergy are not doing any harm, but would do it more if they were not so much

I was perfectly with G. S. as to the mentioned peculiar situation in this clergy, and I said a few words and in so narrow a space, and in so small a district, that I think we see the whole life and character of the nation the persons engaged in the nation. "What you I described," said I, "appears to me, and you had won from actual experience."

"I am glad it seems to you so," said G. S. the "There are, however, few men who have any notion of the truth of reality; most prefer the more comfortable and comfortable, of which they know nothing, and by which the imagination may be cultivated, easily enough."

"Then there are others who claim altogether to be real and, as it is, they want the poetic spirit, are too serious in their business. For instance, in this clergy, some give Alexis a servant to carry a bundle, thinking that all that was poetic and idyllic would thus have been destroyed."

From "Alexis and Dora," the conversation then turned to "Wilhelm Meister." "There are odd critics in this world," said Goethe; "they blamed me for letting the hero of this novel live so much in bad company; but by this very circumstance, that I considered this so-called bad company as a vase, into which I could put everything I had to say about good society, I gained a poetical body, and a varied one into the bargain. Had I, on the contrary, delineated good society by the so-called good society, nobody would have read the book."

"In the seeming trivialities of 'Wilhelm Meister' there is always something higher at bottom, and nothing is required but eyes and knowledge of the world, and power of comprehension to perceive the great in the small. For those who are without such qualities, let it suffice to receive the picture of life as real life."

Goethe then showed me a very interesting English work, which illustrated all Shakspeare in copper plates. Each page embraced, in six small designs, one piece with some verse written beneath, so that the leading idea and the most important situations of each work were brought before the eyes. All these immortal tragedies and comedies thus passed before the mind like processions of masks.

"It is even terrifyine," said Goethe, "to look through these little pictures. Thus are we first made to feel the infinite wealth and grandeur of Shakspeare. There is no *action* in human life which he has not exhibited and expressed! And all with what care and freedom!

"But we cannot talk about Shakspeare; everything is inadequate. I have touched upon the subject in my 'Wilhelm Meister,' but that is not saying much. He is not a theatrical poet; he never thought of the stage; it was far too narrow for his great mind; nay, the whole visible world was too narrow.

"He is even too rich and too powerful. A productive *nature** ought not to read more than one of his dramas in a year if it would not be wrecked entirely. I did well to

* Vide p. 185, where a remark is made on the word *nature*, as applied to a person. *Notes.*

began immediately to speak in melodious verses. I could not but admire him, yet I could not praise him. It was not a return to Hamburg that he described, but merely the emotions on the return of a son to his parents, relations, and friends; and his poem would have served just as well for a return to Merseburg or Jena, as for a return to Hamburg. Yet what a remarkable, peculiar city is Hamburg! and what a rich field was offered him for the most minute description, if he had known or ventured to take hold of the subject properly!"

I remarked that this subjective tendency was the fault of the public, which decidedly applauds all sentimentality.

"Perhaps so," said Goethe; "but the public is still more pleased if you give it something better. I am certain that if, with Wolff's talent at improvisation, one could faithfully describe the life of great cities, such as Rome, Naples, Vienna, Hamburg, or London, and that in such a lively manner, that one's hearers would believe they saw with their own eyes, everybody would be enchanted. If he breaks through to the objective, he is saved, the stuff is in him; for he is not without imagination. Only he must make up his mind at once, and strive to grasp it."

"I fear," said I, "that this will be harder than we imagine, since it demands entire regeneration of his mode of thought. Even if he succeeds, he will, at all events, come to a momentary standstill with his production, and long practice will be required to make the objective become a second nature."

"The step I grant is very great," said Goethe; "but he must take courage, and make his resolution at once. It is in such matters, like the dread of water in bathing—we must jump in at once, and the element is ours."

"If a person learns to sing," continued Goethe, "all the notes which are within his natural compass are easy to him, while those which lie beyond the compass are at first extremely difficult. But to be a vocalist, he must conquer them, for he must have them all at command. Just so with the poet;—he deserves not the name while he only speaks out his few subjective feelings; but as soon as he can appropriate to himself, and express the world, he is a

poet. Then he is inexhaustible, and can be always new, while a subjective nature has soon talked out his little internal material, and is at last ruined by mannerism. People always talk of the study of the ancients; but what does that mean, except that it says, turn your attention to the real world, and try to express it, for that is what the ancients did when they were alive."

Goethe arose [and walked to and fro, while I remained seated at the table, as he likes to see me. He stood a moment at the stove, and then, like one who has reflected, came to me, and with his finger on his lips, said,

"I will now tell you something which you will often find confirmed in your experience. All eras in a state of decline and dissolution are subjective; on the other hand, all progressive eras have an objective tendency. Our present time is retrograde, for it is subjective: we see this not merely in poetry, but also in painting, and much besides. Every healthy effort, on the contrary, is directed from the inward to the outward world, as you will see in all great eras, which have been really in a state of progression, and all of an objective nature."

These remarks led to a most interesting conversation, in which especial mention was made of the great period of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The conversation now turned upon the theatre, and the weak, sentimental, gloomy character of modern productions.

"Molière is my strength and consolation at present," said I; "I have translated his 'Avare,' and am now busy with his 'Médecin malgré lui.' Molière is indeed a great, a genuine (*reiner*) man."

"Yes," said Goethe, "a genuine man; that is the proper term. There is nothing distorted about him. He ruled the manners of his day, while, on the contrary, our Iffland and Kotzebue allowed themselves to be ruled by theirs, and were limited and confined in them. Molière chastised men by drawing them just as they were."

"I would give something," said I, "to see his plays acted in all their purity! Yet such things are much too strong and natural for the public, so far as I am acquainted with it. Is not this over-refinement to be attributed to the so-called ideal literature of certain authors?"

"No," said Goethe, "it has its source in society itself. What business have our young girls at the theatre? They do not belong to it—they belong to the convent, and the theatre is only for men and women, who know something of human affairs. When Molière wrote, girls were in the convent, and he was not forced to think about them. But now we cannot get rid of these young girls, and pieces which are weak, and therefore *proper*, will continue to be produced. Be wise and stay away, as I do. I was really interested in the theatre only so long as I could have a practical influence upon it. It was my delight to bring the establishment to a high degree of perfection; and when there was a performance, my interest was not so much in the pieces as in observing whether the actors played as they ought. The faults I wished to point out I sent in writing to the *Regisseur*, and was sure they would be avoided on the next representation. Now I can no longer have any practical influence in the theatre, I feel no calling to enter it; I should be forced to endure defects without being able to amend them; and that would not suit me. And with the reading of plays, it is no better. The young German poets are eternally sending me tragedies; but what am I to do with them? I have never read German plays except with the view of seeing whether I could act them; in every other respect they were indifferent to me. What am I to do now, in my present situation, with the pieces of these young people? I can gain nothing for myself by reading how things ought *not* to be done; and I cannot assist the young poets in a matter which is already finished. If, instead of their printed plays, they would send me the plan of a play, I could at least say, 'Do it,' or 'Leave it alone,' or 'Do it this way,' or 'Do it that;' and in this there might be some use.

"The whole mischief proceeds from this, that poetical culture is so widely diffused in Germany that nobody now ever makes a bad verse. The young poets who send me their works are not inferior to their predecessors, and, since they see these praised so highly, they cannot understand why they are not praised also. And yet we cannot encourage them, when talents of the sort exist by hundreds; and we ought not to favour superfluities while so much that is useful remains to be done. Were there a single one

who towered above all the rest, it would be well, for the world can only be served by the extraordinary."

Thurs., Feb. 16.—I went, at seven this evening, to the house, to whom I found alone in his room. I sat down by the table, and told him that yesterday I had seen, at the inn, the Duke of Wellington, who was returning on his way to St. Petersburg. "Indeed!" said Goethe, with animation; "what was he like? tell me all about him. Does he look like his portrait?"

"Yes," said I; "but better, with more of a marked character. If you ever look at his face, all the portraits are nought. One need only see him once, never to forget him, such an impression does he make. His eyes are brown, and of the serenest brilliancy; one feels the effect of his glance; his mouth speaks, even when it is closed, he looks a man who has had many thoughts, and has lived through the greatest deeds, who now can handle the world serenely and calmly, and whom nothing more can disturb. He seemed to me as hard and as tempered as a Damascus blade. By his appearance, he is far advanced in the fifties; is upright, slim, and not very tall or stout. I saw him getting into his carriage to depart. There was something uncommonly cordial in his salutation as he passed through the crowd, and, with a very slight bow, touched his hat with his finger." Goethe listened to my description with visible interest. "You have seen one hero more," said he, "and that is saying something."

We then talked of Napoleon, and I hinted that I had never seen him.

"Truly," said Goethe, "that also was worthy the trouble. What a compendium of the world!" "Did he look like something?" asked I. "He *was* something," replied Goethe; "and he looked what he was—that was all."

I had brought with me for Goethe a very remarkable poem, of which I had spoken to him some evenings before—a poem of his own, written so long since that he had quite forgotten it. It was printed in the beginning of the year 1776, in "*Die Sichtbaren*" (the Visible), a periodical published at the time in Frankfort, and had been brought to Weimar by an old servant of Goethe's, through whom it had fallen into my hands. Undoubtedly it is the

earliest known poem of Goethe's. The subject was the "Descent of Christ into Hell;" and it was remarkable to observe the readiness of the young author with his religious images. The purpose of the poem might have suited Klopstock; but the execution was quite of a different character; it was stronger, freer, and more easy, and had greater energy and better arrangement. The extraordinary ardour reminded one of a period of youth, full of impetuosity and power. Through a want of subject matter, it constantly reverted to the same point, and was of undue length.

I placed before Goethe the yellow, worn-out paper, and as soon as he saw it he remembered his poem. "It is possible," said he, "that Fräulein von Klettenberg induced me to write it: the heading shows that it was written by desire, and I know not any other friend who could have desired such a subject. I was then in want of materials, and was rejoiced when I got anything that I could sing. Lately, a poem of that period fell into my hands, which I wrote in the English language, and in which I complained of the dearth of poetic subjects. We Germans are really ill off in that respect; our earliest history lies too much in obscurity, and the later is without general native interest, through the want of one ruling dynasty. Klopstock tried Arminius, but the subject lies too far off; nobody feels any connection with it; no one knows what to make of it, and accordingly it has never been popular, or produced any result. I made a happy hit with my 'Goetz von Berlichingen;' that was, at any rate, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and something could be done with it.

"For 'Werther' and 'Faust' I was, on the contrary, obliged to draw upon my own bosom, for that which was handed down to me did not go far. I made devils and witches but once; I was glad when I had consumed my northern inheritance, and turned to the tables of the Greeks. Had I earlier known how many excellent things have been in existence for hundreds of years, I should not have written a line, but should have done something else."

Easter-day, Mar. 26. To-day, at dinner, Goethe was in one of his pleasantest moods. He had received something highly valued, Lord Byron's manuscript of the dedication

Sardanapalus." He then said that he had been some time teasing his daughter to send him a letter from Geneva. "You have not done so yet," said I. "I have now everything collected, and I shall write a section with Byron; even the rules shall be ready to-day, in a remarkable manner, and so will the poem, but that letter."

Then the amiable admirer of Byron asked to see the letter. "You gave it to me once," said I. "and I shall not give it back, unless you write me a letter like should be with like, you have been a generous paper of today, and I will be so tomorrow." This was still more necessary to Goethe, and the contest lasted for some time, when it stopped at a lively conversation.

We had risen from table, and the ladies had gone. I remained with Goethe alone. He brought me from his work-room a red portfolio, which he laid on the table and showed me its contents. "Look," said he, "I have everything together which relates to my connection with Lord Byron. Here is his letter from Loughborough, a copy of his dedication; this is my poem, and here I wrote for 'Medwin's Conversation,' &c., &c., I only wrote from Geneva, and she will not give it up."

He then told me of a friendly rivalry which had been made to him from Edinburgh, and which had been made to him from Byron, and which had excited him to a great manner. His mind was quite in the clouds, and he said a thousand interesting things of his works, and his talents.

"English," said he, "is not a better thing, than Byron as they please; but there are very few of them, no poet who is to be compared to him. He is different from all the others, and, for the most part, superior." May 15. I talked with Goethe to-day about 12 o'clock, of whom he spoke very kindly. "When I was in London," said he, "I read his 'Heavenly Pleasures' (Hours) with great pleasure. If he were in England, he would have made us up to the top with observing and depicting nothing less than the sight of life on a large scale."

Thurs., June 1.—Goethe spoke of the “Globe.”* “The contributors,” said he, “are men of the world, cheerful, clear in their views, bold to the last degree. In their censure they are polished and *galant*; whereas our German literati always think they must hate those who do not think like themselves. I consider the ‘Globe’ one of our most interesting periodicals, and could not do without it.”

Wed., July 26.—This evening I had the pleasure of hearing Goethe say a great deal about the theatre.

I told him that one of my friends intended to arrange Lord Byron’s “Two Foscari” for the stage. Goethe doubted his success.

“It is indeed a temptation,” he said. “When a piece makes a deep impression on us in reading, we think it will do the same on the stage, and that we could obtain such a result with little trouble. But this is by no means the case. A piece that is not originally, by the intent and skill of the poet, written for the boards, will not succeed; but whatever is done to it, will always remain something unmanageable. What trouble have I taken with my ‘Goetz von Berlichingen!’ yet it will not go right as an acting play, but is too long; and I have been forced to divide it into two parts, of which the last is indeed theatrically effective, while the first is to be looked upon as a mere introduction. If the first part were given only once as an introduction, and then the second repeatedly, it might succeed. It is the same with ‘Wallenstein:’ ‘The Piccolomini’ does not bear repetition, but ‘Wallenstein’s Death’ is always seen with delight.”

I asked how a piece must be constructed so as to be fit for the theatre.

“It must be symbolical,” replied Goethe; “that is to say, each incident must be significant in itself, and lead to another still more important. The ‘Tartuffe’ of Molière is, in this respect, a great example. Only think what an introduction is the first scene! From the very beginning everything is highly significant, and leads us to expect something still more important which is to come. The beginning of Lessing’s ‘Minna von Barnhelm’ is also

* The celebrated French paper.—*Trans.*

admirable ; but that of the 'Tartuffe' comes only once into the world : it is the greatest and best thing that exists of the kind."

We then came to the pieces of Calderon.

"In Calderon," said Goethe, "you find the same perfect adaptation to the theatre. His pieces are throughout fit for the boards ; there is not a touch in them which is not directed towards the required effect. Calderon is a genius who had also the finest understanding."

"It is singular," said I, "that the dramas of Shakspeare are not theatrical pieces, properly so called, since he wrote them all for his theatre."

"Shakspeare," replied Goethe, "wrote those pieces direct from his own nature. Then, too, his age, and the existing arrangements of the stage, made no demands upon him ; people were forced to put up with whatever he gave them. But if Shakspeare had written for the court of Madrid, or for the theatre of Louis XIV., he would probably have adapted himself to a severer theatrical form. This, however, is by no means to be regretted, for what Shakspeare has lost as a theatrical poet he has gained as a poet in general. Shakspeare is a great psychologist, and we learn from his pieces the secrets of human nature." *

We then talked of the difficulties in managing a theatre.

"The knotty point," said Goethe, "is so to deal with contingencies that we are not tempted to deviate from our higher maxims. Among the higher maxims is this : to keep a good *repertoire* of excellent tragedies, operas, and comedies, to which we can adhere, and which may be regarded as permanent. Among contingencies, I reckon a new piece about which the public is anxious, a 'starring' character (*Gastrolle*), and so forth. We must not be led astray by things of this kind, but always return to our *repertoire*. Our time is so rich in really good pieces, that nothing is easier to a *connoisseur* than to form a good *repertoire* ; but nothing is more difficult to maintain one.

"When Schiller and I superintended the theatre, we had the great advantage of playing through the summer at

* Wie den Menschen zu Muthe ist. The above is only an approximation.—*Trans.*

Lauchstädt. There we had a select audience, who would have nothing but what was excellent; so we always returned to Weimar thoroughly practised in the best plays, and could repeat all our summer performances in the winter. Besides, the Weimar public had confidence in our management, and, even in the case of things they could not appreciate, they were convinced that we acted in accordance with some higher view.

"When the nineties began," continued Goethe, "the proper period of my interest in the theatre was already past, and I wrote nothing for the stage, but wished to devote myself to epic poetry. Schiller revived my extinct interest, and, for the sake of his works, I again took part in the theatre. At the time of my 'Clavigo,' I could easily have written a dozen theatrical pieces. I had no want of subjects, and production was easy to me. I might have written a piece every week, and I am sorry I did not."

Wed., Nov. 8.—To-day, Goethe spoke again of Lord Byron with admiration. "I have," said he, "read once more his 'Deformed Transformed,' and must say that to me his talent appears greater than ever. His devil was suggested by my Mephistophiles; but it is no imitation—it is thoroughly new and original, close, genuine, and spirited. There are no weak passages—not a place where you could put the head of a pin, where you do not find invention and thought. Were it not for his hypochondriacal negative turn, he would be as great as Shakspeare and the ancients." I expressed surprise.

"Yes," said Goethe, "you may believe me. I have studied him anew, and am confirmed in this opinion."

In a conversation some time ago, Goethe had remarked that Byron had too much *empeiria*.* I did not well understand what he meant; but I forbore to ask, and thought of the matter in silence. However, I got nothing by reflection, and found that I must wait till my improved culture, or some happy circumstance, should unlock the secret for me. Such an one occurred when an excellent representation of "Macbeth" at the theatre produced a strong effect

* The import of this Greek word for "experience," and its cognate word "empiric," has nothing in common with the notion of "quackery." The general meaning is, that Byron is too worldly.—*Trans.*

21 met and on the day after we both took a copy of the
12 to read his "Rhapsody." Now, I am not a student of
poem after "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

31 some call it a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
41 "Macbeth," but it is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

51 and sublimity could be a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
61 response. There was the first of the "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

71 nature, which are the first of the "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
81 all initial, and then it is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

91 after has been given to them, and the poem is not a student of
101 id or experience was not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

111 served only to make them speak, and the poem is not a student of
121 great poet ruled us and lifted us up, and the poem is not a student of

131 While reading "Rhapsody," we both were, I think, in a
141 attitude of a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

151 which is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
161 which is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

171 right of a highly gifted poet, but, by the way, the poem is not a student of
181 with the world, the poem is not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

191 have acquired the same stamp. He seemed to be a student of
201 level with all intellectual men, of the world, and the poem is not a student of

211 tier class, being only distinguished from them by the
221 at talent for a presentation, and that the poem is not a student of

231 died in their minds. I felt, in reading "Rhapsody," that I was a student of
241 which is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

251 great, but I found the poem is not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
261 silent, or even expelled by the poem is not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

271 Well, now I think I have a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of
281 and Transformation," and the poem is not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

291 fact.
301 Am I not right?" said he; "the first seven are placed
311 edictically great. The poem is not a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

321 ader to the megal of Rome, I said, and calling it a student of
331 and heverred that it is a student of "Macbeth," and the poem is not a student of

341 "To the highest degree," said I, "the poem is not a student of
351 tag pointed when one respects nothing."
361 to the laughed. "You are not quite making," said he.

371 "Pointed" is only an eye to action, the world does not
381 all of right." Then,

"We must, indeed, confess that the poet says more than ought to be said. He tells us the truth, but it is disagreeable, and we should like him better if he held his peace. There are things in the world which the poet should rather conceal than disclose; but this openness lies in Byron's character, and you would annihilate him if you made him other than he is."

"Yes," said I, "he is in the highest degree pointed. How excellent, for instance, is this passage—

'The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deemed;
He hath an ignorant audience?'"

"That is as good and as free as one of my Mephistophiles' sayings."

"Since we are talking of Mephistophiles," continued Goethe, "I will show you something which Condray has brought me from Paris. What do you think of it?"

He laid before me a lithograph, representing the scene where Faust and Mephistophiles, on their way to free Margaret from prison, are rushing by the gallows at night on two horses. Faust rides a black horse, which gallops with all its might, and seems, as well as his rider, afraid of the spectres under the gallows. They ride so fast that Faust can scarcely keep his seat; the current of air has blown off his cap, which, fastened by straps about his neck, flies far behind him. He has turned his fearful inquiring face to Mephistophiles, and is listening to his words. Mephistophiles, on the contrary, sits quiet and undisturbed, like a being of a higher order. He rides no living horse, for he loves not what is living; indeed, he does not need it, for his will moves him with the swiftness he requires. He has a horse merely because he must look as if he were riding, and it has been quite enough for him to find a beast that is a mere bag of bones, from the first field he has come to. It is of a bright colour, and seems to be phosphorescent amid the darkness of night. It is neither bridled nor saddled, but goes without such appendages. The supernatural rider sits easily and negligently, with his face turned towards Faust, in conversation. The opposing element of air does not exist for him; neither he nor his horse feel anything of it. Not a hair of either is stirred.

We expressed much pleasure at this ingenious composi-

the great military events of latter years would have stirred the intellect."

"They have stirred the will more than the intellect," said Goethe, "and the poetical intellect more than the artistic, while all *naïveté* and sensuousness are lost. Without these two great requisites how can a painter produce anything in which we can take any pleasure?"

I said that I had lately, in his "Italian Travels," read of a picture by Correggio, which represents a "weaning," and in which the Infant Christ in Mary's lap stands in doubt between his mother's breast and a pear held before him, and does not know which of the two to choose.

"Aye," said Goethe, "there is a little picture for you! There are mind, *naïveté*, sensuousness, all together. The sacred subject is endowed with an universally human interest, and stands as a symbol for a period of life we must all pass through. Such a picture is immortal, because it grasps backwards at the earliest times of humanity, and forwards at the latest. On the contrary, if Christ were painted suffering the little children to come unto him, it would be a picture that expressed nothing at any rate, nothing of importance.

"For above fifty years," continued Goethe, "I have watched German painting: nay, not merely watched it, but endeavoured to exert some influence on it, and now I can say so much, that as the matter now stands, little is to be expected. Some great talent must come, which will at once appropriate to itself all that is good in the period, and thus surpass every one. The means are at hand, and the way is pointed out. We have now the works of Phidias before our eyes, whereas in our youth nothing of the sort was to be thought of. As I have just said, nothing is wanting but a great talent, and this I hope will come; perhaps it is already in its cradle, and you will live to see its brilliancy."

Wed., Dec. 20. I told Goethe after dinner, that I had made a discovery which afforded me much pleasure. I had observed in a burning taper that the lower transparent part of the flame exhibits a phenomenon analogous to that of the blue sky, since in both we see darkness through a lighted but dense medium.

phenomena on a small scale. The law by which the sky is blue may likewise be observed in the lower part of a burning taper, in burning spirits, and also in the bright smoke which rises from a village with dark mountains in the background."

"But how do the disciples of Newton explain this extremely simple phenomenon?" "That you must not know," answered Goethe. "Their explanation is too stupid, and a good head-piece is incredibly damaged when it meddles with stupidities. Do not trouble yourself about the Newtonians, but be satisfied with the pure doctrine, and you will find it quite enough for you."

"An occupation with that which is wrong," said I, "is perhaps in this case as unpleasant and as injurious as taking up a bad tragedy to illustrate it in all its parts, and to expose it in its nudity."

"The case is precisely the same," said Goethe, "and we should not meddle with anything of the sort without actual necessity. I receive mathematics as the most sublime and useful science, so long as they are applied in their proper place; but I cannot commend the misuse of them in matters which do not belong to their sphere, and in which, noble science as they are, they seem to be mere nonsense. As if, forsooth! things only exist when they can be mathematically demonstrated. It would be foolish for a man not to believe in his mistress's love because she could not prove it to him mathematically. She can mathematically prove her dowry, but not her love. The mathematicians did not find out the metamorphosis of plants. I have achieved this discovery without mathematics, and the mathematicians were forced to put up with it. To understand the phenomena of colour nothing is required but unbiassed observation and a sound head, but these are scarcer than folks imagine."

"How do the French and English of the present day stand with respect to the theory of colour?" asked I. "Each of the two nations," replied Goethe, "has its advantages and disadvantages. With the English, it is a good quality, that they make everything practical, but they are pedants. The French have good brains, but with them everything must be positive, and if it is not so they make

it so. However, with respect to the theory of colours, they are in a good way, and one of their best men comes near the truth. He says that colours are inherent in the things themselves; for as there is in nature an acidulating principle, so also is there an alkering principle. This view, I admit, does not explain the phenomena, but it places the object within the sphere of nature, and frees it from the load of mathematics."

The Berlin papers were brought in, and Goethe sat down to read them. He handed one of them to me, and I found in the theatrical intelligence, that at the opera house and the theatre royal they never but as had pieces as they gave here. "How should it be otherwise?" said Goethe. "There is no doubt that with the help of good English, French, and Spanish poems, a repertoire can be formed sufficiently abundant to furnish a good piece every evening. But what need is felt by the nation always to see good pieces? The time in which Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides lived was different. Then there was mind enough to discern only what was really great and better. But now are such be times, where is felt a need for the false as well as the true, to appreciate it!"

"And then," continued Goethe, "the people will have something to do. In Berlin or Paris, the public are always the same. A quantity of new pieces are written and brought out in Paris, and you must see five or six thoroughly bad ones before you are struck by a single good one. The only exception to keep up a German theatre at the present time is that of 'starring' (*thätellen*). If I had the direction of my theatre now, the whole winter should be passed in showing 'stars.' Thus, not only would all the good pieces be represented once more, but the interest of the public would be led more from the piece to the actor, a power of comparing and judging would be required, the public would gain in penetration, and the superior actors would be encouraged to star would maintain our own national state of excitement and emulation. As I said I am acquainted with your starring, and you will be interested at the benefit that will accrue both to the theatre and the public, if there be a time

when a clever man, who could not but be a great one, will take four theatres at once, and make the theatre his study-room. And I am sure he will be a great one, and I trust him if he only had one."

Wed., Dec. 27. I had been a while reflecting at home, on the phenomenon of the blue and yellow shadow, and although this long rumination had not been a light gleamed upon me after conversation in the evening, and I was gradually convinced that I understood the phenomenon.

To-day at dinner, I told Goethe that I had solved the riddle. "That is a great advantage," said Goethe, "you shall show me after dinner." "I would rather write my solution down," answered I, "for I want the right words for a verbal explanation." "You may write it down afterwards, but to-day you shall solve the problem before my eyes, and I desire to grapple with your own mouth, that I may see whether you are in the right way."

After dinner, when it was still quite light, Goethe said to me, "Can you make the experiment now?" "No," said I. "Why not?" asked Goethe. "It is too light," I replied. "We must have a little dark, in order that the candle may throw a decided shade, but not so much that daylight cannot fall upon the shadow." "Humph!" said Goethe, "that is not wrong."

The dusk of the evening at last arrived, and I told Goethe that this was the time. He took a thin sheet of paper, and gave me a sheet of white paper, and said, "Now, go on with your experiment, and I will observe it," said he.

I placed the paper on the table near the window, laid the sheet of paper near it, and when I placed the stick in the middle of the paper, between the candle and the light, the phenomenon was there in all its beauty. The shadow towards the candle was a decided yellow, and the one towards the window a perfect blue.

"Now," said Goethe, "tell me the blue shadow produced?" "Before I explain that," said I, "I will lay down the fundamental law, from which I deduce both phenomena. Light and darkness are two claims, but they are the two extremes between which, and by the modification of which, all colours are produced." Next to the

extremes of light and darkness, arise the two colours yellow and blue. The yellow borders on light, inasmuch as it is produced by seeing light through a dim transparency; the blue borders on darkness, inasmuch as it is produced by seeing darkness through an illuminated transparency. If we now come to our phenomena," continued, "we see that the stick, through the strength of its taper light, casts a decided shadow. This shadow would appear as so much black darkness if I closed the shutter and shut out the light of day; but here the daylight comes freely by the window, and forms an illuminated medium through which I see the darkness of the shadow; and in conformity with our law, the blue colour is produced."

Goethe laughed. "Well, that would be the blue, wouldn't it?" said he; "but how do you explain the yellow shadow?" "From the law of the dimmed light," replied. "The burning taper throws upon the white paper a light which has already a slightly yellowish tinge. The daylight, however, is strong enough to throw a decided shadow, which, as far as it extends, dims the light thus, in conformity with our law, the yellow colour is produced. If I lessen the dimness by bringing the stick as nearly as possible to the candle, a pure clear yellow is produced; but if I increase the dimness by removing the shadow as far as possible from the candle, the yellow is heightened to a reddish yellow, or even to a red."

Goethe again laughed, and looked very mysterious. "Now," said he, "am I right? You have observed the phenomenon well, and have described it very precisely," replied Goethe, "but you have not explained it. Your explanation is ingenious, but it is not the right one."

"Help me, then," said I, "and solve the riddle, for I am extremely impatient." "You shall learn the solution," replied Goethe, "but not to-day and not in this manner. I will next show you another phenomenon, which will bring the law plainly before your eyes. You are at the mark, and cannot proceed further in this direction. When you have once comprehended the new law, it will be transplanted into quite another region. Come to-day and dine with me an hour earlier, when the light is clear, and I will show you a plainer phenomenon."

ch you will at once comprehend the law which lies at foundation of this one. I am very glad," he continued, "at you take this interest in colour; it will produce a sense of infinite delight."

When I left Goethe in the evening, I could not get the sight of the phenomenon out of my head, and it troubled my very dreams; but even thus I did not gain a clearer view, and did not advance one step nearer to a solution of the enigma.

"I am going on, though slowly, with my paper on 'Natural Science,'" said Goethe to me lately; "not because I think that I can materially advance science, but because of the many pleasant associations I mention by it. Of occupations, that with nature is the most interesting. An exact connection or correspondence in natural history is not to be thought of. They now want to know what town on the Rhine is meant in my 'Hermann and Dorothea,' as if it were not better to choose according to the fancy. They want truth—they want actuality, and so poetry is destroyed."

1827.

Feb., Jan. 3.—At dinner, we talked over the magnificent speech for Portugal. "Some people," said Goethe, "think all this speech coarse; but these people are very ignorant. They want—they have a morbid desire to be original and great. It is no objection, it is no reproach, if you must have something great, that they say, like our Emperor Napoleon was alive they hated him, and that we have no good conduit-pipe. When it was necessary with our Emperor (fron'dirten) at the Holy Alliance, and yet nothing more or more beneficial for mankind was ever accomplished, it is Canning's turn. His speech for Portugal is the result of a grand conception. He feels very well the extent of his power and the dignity of his position, and the right to speak as he feels. That the world can understand; and what to us seems sublime, seems to

to break open this path. The revolutions, and the reign of Napoleon, have been too cruel to the cause, if the years of war allowed a soul to stand up and spring up, and were consequently favourable to the cause, yet a great tide of the intellect were formed in this period, when men, instead of being able to attain reflection, and come forward with talents of imagination.

I asked Goethe whether the classical parts had been opposed to the excellent Böhmeyer. "The cause of the ancient poetry," said Goethe, "is old and tried, and, as poems were accustomed to it. However, he has been in many respects more free than his predecessors, and has therefore been attacked by the poetaster party."

The conversation turned upon painting, and, on the occasion, of the antiquity not supposed to be such. "You do not pretend to be a connoisseur," said Goethe, "but I will show you a picture, in which, though it has been painted by one of the best living German artists, you will at the first glance be struck by the most glaring offences against the primary laws of art. You will see that details are much done, but you will be dissatisfied with the whole, and will not know what to make of it, and this not because the painter has not sufficient talent, but because he has, who should have directed his talent, is dishonest, like that of the other bigots to antiquity, so that he never enters the numbers, and, if not back to their original, he at least takes them for his patterns."

"Raphael had no intention of being a bigot, he was a man of nature, for nature and freedom. He was not a bigot, instead of being thankful, saying there is a law, he was proceeding on the good way, returning to the state of nature."

"This is too bad, and it is bad to be a bigot, and a darkening of the intellect. As I have said, there is no God, and no support in art itself, the power of the imagination and fancy, without these two they cannot sustain themselves in their work."

"There is," continued Goethe, "one high point of view. If you see a great master, you will always find that he was what was said to him, and you will find that it was this which made him great. Men like Raphael do not spring out of the ground. They take root in the antique, and

the best which had been done before them. Had they used the advantages of their time, there would be little to say about them."

The conversation now turned upon old German poetry. I mentioned Flemming. "Flemming," said Goethe, "is a very fair talent, a little prosaic and citizen-like, and of little practical use nowadays. It is strange," he continued, "that with all I have done, there is not one of my poems that would suit the Lutheran hymn-book." I laughed and assented, while I said to myself that in this odd expression there was more than could be seen at the first glance.

Sun. evening, Jan. 12.—I found a musical party at Goethe's. The performers were the Eberwein family, and some members of the orchestra. Among the few hearers were General Superintendent Röhr, Hofrath Vogel, and some ladies. Goethe had wished to hear a quartet by a celebrated young composer, and this was played first. Karl Eberwein, twelve years old, played the piano entirely to Goethe's satisfaction, and indeed admirably, so that the quartet was in every respect well performed.

"It is a strange state," said Goethe, "to which the improvements in the technical and mechanical part of the art have brought our newest composers. Their productions are no longer music; they go beyond the level of human feelings, and one can give them no response from the head and heart. How do *you* feel? I hear with my ears."

I replied that I fared no better.

"Yet the Allegro," said he, "had character; that ceaseless whirling and twirling brought before my mind the waltz-dance on the Blocksberg, and thus I had a picture to contrast with this odd music."

After a pause, during which the party discoursed and took refreshments, Goethe asked Madame Eberwein to sing some songs. She sang the beautiful song, "Mitternacht," with Zelter's music, which made the deepest impression.

"That song," said Goethe, "remains beautiful, however often it is heard! There is something eternal, indestructible, in the melody!"

The "Erlkönig" obtained great applause; and the "Ich hab's gesagt der guten Mutter," made every one

mark that the music so happily fitted the words, that no one could even conceive it otherwise. Goethe himself was in the highest degree pleased.

By way of conclusion to this pleasant evening, Malvina Eberwein, at Goethe's request, sang some songs from the "Divan," with her husband's music. The first song, "Ich will Reize möcht' ich bergen," pleased Goethe especially. "Eberwein," he said, "sometimes surprises himself." He then asked for the song, "Ach und doch, für dich Schwingen," which was also of a kind to excite the deepest emotions.

After the party had left, I remained some moments alone with Goethe. "I have," said he, "this evening made the remark that these songs in the 'Divan' have no farther connection with me. Both the oriental and sentimental elements have ceased to live in me. I have left them behind, like a cast-off snake-skin on my path. The song, 'Um Mitternacht,' on the contrary, has not lost its connection with me; it is a living part of me, and goes on living with me still.

"Often times, my own productions seem wholly strange to me. To-day, I read a passage in French, and thought as I read—'This man speaks cleverly enough; you would not have said it otherwise;' when I look at it closely, I find it is a passage translated from my own writings."

Mon. evening, Jan. 15. After the completion of the "Helen," Goethe had employed himself but sparingly on the continuation of the "Wanderjahre." He often talked to me about the progress of this work.

"In order the better to use the materials I possess," said he to me one day, "I have taken the first part entirely to pieces, and intend, by mingling the old with the new, to make two parts. I have ordered everything that is printed to be copied entire. The places where I have new matter to introduce are marked, and when my secretary comes to such a mark, I dictate what is wanting, and then compel myself never to let my work stop."

Another day he said to me, "All the printed part of the 'Wanderjahre' is now completely copied. The places where I am to introduce new matter are filled with blue paper, so that I have always before my eyes what is yet to be done."

As I go on at present, the blue spots gradually vanish, to my great delight."

Some weeks ago, I had heard from his secretary that he was at work on a new *novel*. I therefore abstained from evening visits, and satisfied myself with seeing him once a week at dinner. The novel had now been finished for some time, and this evening he showed me the first sheets. I was delighted, and read as far as the important passage where all stand round the dead tiger, and the messenger brings the intelligence that the lion has laid himself in the sun by the ruins.

While reading, I could not but admire the extraordinary clearness with which all objects, down to the very smallest locality, were brought before the eyes. The going out to hunt, the old ruins of the castle, the fair, the way through the fields to the ruins, were all so distinctly painted, that one could not conceive them otherwise than as the poet intended. At the same time, all was written with such circumspection and mastery of subject, that one could never anticipate what was coming, or see a line further than one could read.

"Your excellency," said I, "must have worked after a very defined plan."

"Yes, indeed I," replied Goethe; "I was going to treat the subject thirty years ago, and have carried it in my head ever since. The work went on oddly enough. At that time, immediately after 'Hermann and Dorothea,' I meant to treat it in an epic form and in hexameters, and had drawn up a complete outline with this view. But when I now took up the subject again, not being able to find my old outline, I was obliged to make a new one, and that suitable to the altered form I intended to give the subject. Now my work is ended, the old outline is again found, and I am glad I did not have it earlier; for it would only have confused me. The action and the progress of development were, indeed, unaltered, but the details were entirely different; it had been conceived with a view to an epic treatment in hexameters, and would not therefore have been applicable to this prose form."

The conversation then turned upon the contents.

"That is a beautiful situation," said I, "where Honorio,

to the princess, stands over the dead lion, who menting woman with her boy come up, and the too, with his retinue of huntsmen, leaders to form singular group; it would make an excellent picture, should like to see it painted."

es," said Goethe, "that would be a fine picture, perhaps," continued he, after some reflection, "the is almost too rich, and the figures are too many, it would be very difficult for the artist to group them, distribute the light and shade. That earlier moment,

Honorio kneels on the tiger, and the princess te to him on horseback, I have imagined as a picture, at might be done."

At that Goethe was right, and added that this it contained in fact the gist of the whole situation, so remarked that this novel had a character quite dif- rom those of the "Wanderjahre," inasmuch as every represented the external world—everything was real, ue," said Goethe, "you will find in it scarcely any of the inward world, and in my other things there is too much."

am now curious to learn," said I, "how the lion will quered; I almost guess that this will take place in a different manner, but *how* I cannot conceive." "It not be right for you to guess it," said Goethe, "and I not reveal the secret to-day. On Thursday evening, give you the conclusion. Till then, the lion shall be sun."

med the conversation to the second part of Faust, ally the classical Walpurgis night, which I viewed only as a sketch, and which Goethe had told me he to print in that form. I had ventured to advise him lo so; for I found that if it were once printed, it would ys left in this unfinished state. Goethe must have t that over in the meantime, for he now told me that resolved not to print the sketch.

m very glad of it," said I; "for now I shall hope to complete it."

night be done in three months," said he; "but when get time for it? The day has too many claims on is difficult to isolate myself sufficiently. The

We were in the liveliest mood, and continued to talk of Napoleon.

"I wish," said young Goethe, "that I had good pictures or engravings of all Napoleon's deeds, to decorate a large room."

"The room must be very large," said Goethe, "and even then it would not hold the pictures, so great are the deeds."

The Chancellor turned the conversation on Luden's "History of the Germans;" and I had reason to admire the dexterity and penetration which young Goethe displayed in deducing all which the reviewers had found to blame in the book from the time in which it was written, and the national views and feelings which had animated the author. We arrived at the result that the wars of Napoleon first explained to us those of Cæsar. "Previously," said Goethe, "Cæsar's book was really not much more than an exercise for classical schools."

From the old German time, the conversation turned upon the Gothic. We spoke of a bookcase which had a Gothic character, and from this were led to discuss the late fashion of arranging entire apartments in the old German and Gothic style, and thus living under the influences of a bygone time.

"In a house," said Goethe, "where there are so many rooms that some are entered only three or four times a year, such a fancy may pass; and I think it a pretty notion of Madame Pankoucke at Paris that she has a Chinese apartment. But I cannot praise the man who fits out the rooms in which he lives with these strange, old-fashioned objects. It is a sort of masquerade, which can, in the long run, do no good in any respect, but must, on the contrary, have an unfavourable influence on the man who adopts it. Such a fashion is in contradiction to the age in which we live, and will only confirm the empty and hollow way of thinking and feeling in which it originates. It is well enough, on a merry winter's evening, to go to a masquerade as a Turk; but what should we think of a man who wore such a mask all the year round? We should think either that he was crazy, or in a fair way to become so before long."

We found Goethe's remarks on this highly practical

subject very convincingly, and the more I read, the more I am
lightly touch any of the subjects of the month with the
pleasantest feeling.

"The conversation now turned to the theatre. G. had rallied me for having, in the previous evening, considered it to him. "He has a theatre in the young," I had turning to the other, "and then, as the first year of his life has given up the theatre for a while, I must be taking a great deal of it. I have not been here, and I am not going to come, but yet I do not know where he will keep his word, especially in a country full of rogues, and he is young here. Indeed, I should have said, I had not seen him, for then I could have said, 'He is a young fellow, who keeps the theatre better than he does in London, and he has nothing can turn a man into a first-rate actor.' He did not make up to me, but he is a young fellow, who keeps the theatre better than he does in London, and he has nothing can turn a man into a first-rate actor." By these words, the other said, I was the more moved.

We talked of Nehalem in "Flames," which was started last Saturday. "I saw it for the first time," said I, "and have been much occupied with thinking whether these extremely rough names could not be softened, but I find very little could be done to them without upshaking the character of the whole."

[illegible]

"'Then a pity,' said I; 'I am, as you say, a Jew and therefore nothing more. I love them as they would have felt them in the weak, forced, and narrow place of the Jew of the East or our later tragic poets.' A Jew of intellect and character as felt in everything of Schopenhauer."

"You," said the other, "are a man of a different kind. You are a man of a different kind."

he could not make anything which would not be greater than the best things of the old time; when he cut his nail, he showed he was a gentleman." We laughed at this, stilling me.

"But I have known persons," continued he, never be content with these first dreams of Summer, at a bathing place, I was walking through a secluded, narrow path, which led to a mill.

Meeting and parting the same women, laden with mud, made me up to me; we went out of the way and entered a small house; narrow room, we fell, after the fashion of the deep dream, in a silent thought, and he called him mine to Schiller's 'Räuber,' when the problem itself there: 'If I had been the Deity on creating the world, and had a reason, as the Schiller's 'Räuber' would have been written have been the world created?' We exchanged: "What do you say to that?" "That it would like when it is a poet, and is already manifested."

"There is the end of the world," I said, getting up, and going to the window. Then we returned, passed by Schiller's 'Räuber' formed, and we shall see, but few young people in the theatre, but in Schiller's 'Räuber,' 'Fiesco' is given, the 'Fiesco' and the 'Fiesco' alone."

"So it was," said Goethe, "fifty years ago, probably, fifty years hence. Do not let in the world will be much advanced in culture, so that young people will pass over the middle-aged young man, but, written is always, but only people. Even in the world progress, general always begin at the beginning, and the youth cultivation will be repeated in the individual, so as to irritate me, and a long time ago in this fashion:

Still let the battle pass away,
Let pleasure never know delay;
Old time and toasting are always well,
And youngsters every day are born.

"I need only look out of the window to see, in the brooms that sweep the street, and the children who run about, a visible symbol of the world, that is always wearing out and always becoming young again. Children's games and the diversions of youth are preserved from century to century; for, absurd as these may appear to a more mature age, children are always children, and are at all times alike. Hence we ought not to put down the midsummer bonfires, or spoil the pleasure which the little dears take in them."

With this and the like cheerful conversation the hours at table passed swiftly by. We younger people then went into the upper room, while the Chancellor remained with Goethe.

Thurs. evening, Jan. 18. - Goethe had promised me the rest of the novel this evening. I went to him at half-past six, and found him alone in his comfortable work-room. I sat down with him at table, and after we had talked over the immediate events of the day, Goethe arose and gave me the wished-for last sheets. "There you may read the conclusion," said he. I began, while Goethe walked up and down the room, and occasionally stood at the stove. As usual, I read softly to myself.

The sheets of the last evening had ended where the lion is lying in the sun outside the wall of the old ruin, at the foot of an aged beech, and preparations are made to subdue him. The prince is going to send the hunters after him, but the stranger begs him to spare his lion, being confident that he can bring him back into his cage by milder means. This child, said he, will accomplish his work by pleasant words and the sweet tones of his flute. The prince consents, and after he has arranged the necessary measures of precaution, rides back into the town with his men. Honorio, with a number of hunters, occupies the defile, that, in case the lion comes down, he may scare him back by kindling a fire. The mother and the child, led by the warder of the castle, ascend the ruin, on the other side of which the lion is lying by the outer wall.

The design is to lure the mighty animal into the spacious castle-yard. The mother and the warder conceal themselves above in the half-ruined hall, while the child goes

I had not read without emotion the concluding incident. Still I did not know what to say. I was astonished but not satisfied. It seemed to me that the conclusion was too simple,* too ideal, too lyrical; and that at least some of the other figures should have reappeared, and, by winding up the whole, have given more breadth to the termination. Goethe observed that I had a doubt in my mind, and endeavoured to set me right. "If," said he, "I had again brought in some of the other figures at the end, the conclusion would have been prosaic. What could they do and say, when everything is done already? The prince and his men have ridden into the town, where his assistance is needed. Honorio, as soon as he learns that the lion is secured, will follow with his hunters, and the man will soon come from the town with his iron cage and put the lion into it. All these things are foreseen, and therefore should not be detailed. If they were, we should become prosaic. But an ideal, nay, a lyrical conclusion, was necessary; for after the pathetic speech of the man, which in itself is poetical prose, a further elevation is required, and I was obliged to have recourse to lyrical poetry, nay, even to a song."

"To find a simile to this novel," continued Goethe, "imagine a green plant shooting up from its root, thrusting forth strong green leaves from the sides of its sturdy stem, and at last terminating in a flower. The flower is unexpected and startling, but come it must—nay, the whole foliage has existed only for the sake of that flower, and would be worthless without it."

At these words I breathed lightly. The scales seemed to fall from my eyes, and a feeling of the excellence of this marvellous composition began to stir within me.

Goethe continued,—"The purpose of this novel was to show how the unmanageable and the invincible is often better restrained by love and pious feeling than by force. And this beautiful aim, which is set forth by the child and the lion, charmed me on to the completion of the work. This is the ideal—this is the flower. The green foliage of the extremely real introductory is only there for the sake of

* In the sense of a group being *simple*. The German word is "einsam" (solitary).—*Trans.*

this ideal, and only worth anything for account of what is the real in it all. We take delight in it, as represented with truth; nay, it may give us a knowledge of certain things, but the proper vein higher nature flows from the ideal, which gives the heart of the poet."

I palpably felt how right Goethe was, for the case of his novel differed from mine, and had produced several plays, such as I had not known for a long time; and, indeed, thought I to myself, and to folks, of the poet, that he can write anything and at his pleasure and age. I did not refrain from expressing on this point to Goethe, and from commending myself that this production, which was unique, I had now a visible existence.

"I am glad," said Goethe, "that you are satisfied; and I am also glad on my own account, that I read of a subject which I carried about with me for years. Schiller and Herder, to whom I formerly presented my play, all said I was to keep on because they could not do without it, and became the subject of conversation, which I was tired of giving up. I could do therefore no more, but resolved never to write anything. Herder had asked me, 'Wallenstein,' before he had written it, I should have ended him mean it; for I could never have that, from such a subject, so excellent a drama made. Schiller was opposed to that treatment of the subject in hexameters, to which I was inclined, even after my 'Hermann and Dorothea,' and advised octosyllables. You see, however, that I have succeeded, proper; for much depended on an accurate design the beauty, and in this I should have been content a verse of the sort recommended. Besides, the character at the beginning, and the very ideal idea the conclusion of the novel, tell best in prose; a little more have a pretty effect, which could not be done either by hexameters or by Octava Rima."

The single files and march of the "Wanderjahr" talked of; and it was observed that each was drawn from the others by peculiar character and tone.

reason of this," said Goethe, "I will explain. I went to work like a painter, who, with certain subjects, shuns certain colours, and makes others predominate. Thus, for a morning landscape, he puts a great deal of blue on his palette, and but little yellow. But if he is to paint an evening scene, he takes a great deal of yellow, and almost omits the blue. I proceeded in the same way with my different literary productions, and this is the cause of their varied character."

I thought within myself that this was a very wise maxim, and was pleased that Goethe had uttered it.

I then, especially with reference to this last novel, admired the detail with which the scenery was described.

"I have," said Goethe, "never observed Nature with a view to poetical production; but, because my early drawing of landscapes, and my later studies in natural science, led me to a constant, close observation of natural objects, I have gradually learned Nature by heart even to the minutest details, so that, when I need anything as a poet, it is at my command; and I cannot easily sin against truth. Schiller had not this observation of Nature. The localities of Switzerland, which he used in 'William Tell,' were all related to him by me; but he had such a wonderful mind, that even on hearsay, he could make something that possessed reality."

The conversation now turned wholly on Schiller, and Goethe proceeded thus:—

"Schiller's proper productive talent lay in the ideal; and it may be said he has not his equal in German or any other literature. He has almost everything that Lord Byron has; but Lord Byron is his superior in knowledge of the world. I wish Schiller had lived to know Lord Byron's works, and wonder what he would have said to so congenial a mind. Did Byron publish anything during Schiller's life?"

I could not say with certainty. Goethe took down the "Conversations-Lexicon," and read the article on Byron, making many hasty remarks as he proceeded. It appeared that Byron had published nothing before 1807, and thus therefore Schiller could have seen nothing of his.

he endured at the military school. In later days, when he had enough physical freedom, he passed over to the ideal; and I would almost say that this idea killed him, since it led him to make demands on his physical nature which were too much for his strength.

"The Grand Duke fixed on Schiller, when he was established here, an income of one thousand dollars yearly, and offered to give him twice as much in case he should be hindered by sickness from working. Schiller declined this last offer, and never availed himself of it. 'I have talent,' said he, 'and must help myself.' But as his family enlarged of late years, he was obliged, for a livelihood, to write two dramas annually; and to accomplish this, he forced himself to write days and weeks when he was not well. He would have his talent obey him at any hour. He never drank much; he was very temperate; but, in such hours of bodily weakness, he was obliged to stimulate his powers by the use of spirituous liquors. This habit impaired his health, and was likewise injurious to his productions. The faults which some winceless find in his works I deduce from this source. All the passages which they say are not what they ought to be, I would call pathological passages; for he wrote them on those days when he had not strength to find the right and true motives. I have every respect for the categorical imperative. I know how much good may proceed from it; but one must not carry it too far, for then this idea of ideal freedom certainly leads to no good."

Amid these interesting remarks, and similar discourse on Lord Byron and the celebrated German authors of whom Schiller had said that he liked Kotzebue best, for he, at any rate, produced something, the hours of evening passed swiftly along, and Goethe gave me the novel, that I must study it quietly at home.

Sun. evening, Jan. 21. — I went at half-past seven this evening to Goethe, and stayed with him about an hour. He showed me a volume of new French poems, by Mademoiselle Gay, and spoke of them with great praise.

"The French," said he, "push their way, and it is well worth while to look after them. I have lately been striving hard to form a notion of the present state of the French litera-

ture; and if I succeed I shall not regret my loss of time. It is very interesting to observe that I have not written a line, for the first time, at work with the pen, since I was in the north long ago.

"A mediocre talent, it indeed always has been in my age, and must be fed by the clearest of theories. With the French it is the same; we cannot write without a modern phlogiston, only that with them it is called *science*, *goût*, and *spiritualité*."

"What says your excellency to Herwegh and his version of 'Clara Gazul'?"

"Those I except," said Goethe; "they are good enough for who have a foundation in themselves, and I have not changed the mode of thinking which led me to that opinion."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said I; "and I have had a similar feeling about the *Clara*."

The conversation turned to the French translation of the picture. "I will show you something," said Goethe, "and it will be interesting to you, as it is the first of a new and large volume, which I have been engaged to publish for you."

"Certainly," said I; "I have been told that you have his translation of Schlegel, and that the French people have given me long since a high opinion of him."

"You know he has been ad nauseam analysed by the French; and now a collection of the criticisms and his answers has been published. He is not so happy in his philosophical inquiries, which he has given us in the form of little dialogues; but his letters are excellent. He has written, for instance, he writes to Tieck upon the *Walden* (in which, from some affinities), and I wish to read it to you; it is, and it must be easy to say anything better about that novel."

Goethe read me these excellent remarks, and was talked them over point by point, winning the object. He cleared up of the views, and the logical sequence of the reasoning. Although Solger admitted that the facts of the "*Walden* wandtschaften" had their germ in the nature of the characters, he nevertheless blamed that of Tieck.

"I do not quarrel with him," said Goethe, "because he cannot endure Edward. I myself cannot endure him, but was obliged to make him such a man in order to bring out

my first. He is, indeed, very much to be pitied, and I am sure many people in the higher ranks will sympathize with him, if they take the place of a doctor.

"But in the end, when placed in the American market, while all the other persons of the same kind are busy with their own and work, he alone remains unemployed because of the poverty of his nature, and he must go back to his land, but he does not fall into the error of the other persons."

"But in this, that the poor have no land, could they not have not fall into the error?"

We were joined with the rest of the

"There is nothing wrong here," said the

"I have," said I, "the same opinion as that of Mr. Andrews, character; but I am so satisfied that I may, every day, find, just as much to be learned from a child, as I will find in the whole of the world."

"No number," said the other, "for I am, I know myself, a person who was growing here; yet I hope to reach the great city of the chamber."

"The *Walden* remarks," continued he, "were written as early as the year 1892. I should then have been much cheered to have heard of kind words about the *Walden* remarks in *Science*,¹ and that time, notwithstanding, as many pleasant remarks were vouchsafed me about that year."

[illegible]

I am sorry about Solger ; he was an admirable being, and deserved, better than many, a friendly answer."

I turned the conversation to the novel, which I had now frequently read and studied at home. "All the first part," said I, "is only an introduction, but nothing is set forth beyond what is necessary ; and this necessary preliminary is executed with such grace, that we cannot fancy it is only for the sake of something else, but would give it a value of its own."

"I am glad that you feel this," said Goethe, "but I must do something yet. According to the laws of a good introduction, the proprietors of the animals must make their appearance in it. When the princess and the uncle ride by the booth, the people must come out and entreat the princess to honour it with a visit." "Assuredly you are right," said I ; "for, since all the rest is indicated in the introduction, these people must be so likewise ; and it is perfectly natural that, with their devotion to their treasury, they would not let the princess pass unassailed."

"You see," said Goethe, "that in a work of this kind, even when it is finished as a whole, there is still something to be done with the details."

Goethe then told me of a foreigner who had lately visited him, and had talked of translating several of his works.

"He is a good man," said Goethe, "but, as to his literature, he shows himself a mere dilettante ; for he does not yet know German at all, and is already talking of the translations he will make, and of the portraits which he will prefix to them.

"That is the very nature of the dilettanti, that they have no idea of the difficulties which lie in a subject, and always wish to undertake something for which they have no capacity."

Thurs. evening, Jan. 29.—At seven o'clock I went with the manuscript of the novel and a copy of Béranger to Goethe. I found M. Soret in conversation with him upon modern French literature. I listened with interest, and it was observed that the modern writers had learned a great deal from De Lille, as far as good versification was concerned. Since M. Soret, as a born Genevese, did not speak German

ly, while Goethe talks French tolerably well, the conversation was carried on in that language, and only me German when I put in a word. I took my "ranger" out of my pocket, and gave it to Goethe, who wished to read his admirable song again. M. Soret brought the portrait prefixed to the poem was a great success. Goethe was much pleased to have that beautiful in his hands.

"These songs," said he, "may be looked upon as perfect, as the best things in their kind, especially when you have the burden, without which they would be almost earnest, too pointed, and too epigrammatic for song. Heranger reminds me ever of Horace and Hatz, who stand the same way above their times, satirically and playfully setting forth the corruption of manners. Heranger the same relation to his contemporaries; but as he sings to the lower class, the licentious and vulgar are very hateful to him, and he treats them with a sort of severity."

Many similar remarks were made upon Heranger, and on modern French writers, till M. Soret went to court. I remained alone with Goethe.

A sealed packet lay upon the table. Goethe laid his hand upon it. "This," said he, "is 'Helen,' which is going to Cotta to be printed."

I felt, at these words, more than I could say; I felt the importance of the moment. For, as it is with a newly built vessel which first goes to sea, and with respect to which we know not what destiny it must encounter, is it likewise with the intellectual creation of a great master which first goes forth into the world to exercise its influence through many ages, and to produce manifold destinies.

"I have," said Goethe, "till now, been always finding little things to add or to touch up; but I must finish now, and am glad that it is going to the post, and that I shall be at liberty to turn to some other object. Let it meet its proper destiny. My comfort is, that the general culture of Germany stands at an incredibly high point; so that I need not fear that such a production will long remain unsundered and without effect."

In his thirtieth year he had the honour to talk with the Emperor; then there is another of two lovers who showed such great purity during a long acquaintance, that when they were on one occasion obliged to pass the night in the same chamber, they occupied the time with conversation, and did not approach one another.

"And in the same way, there are innumerable other legends, all turning upon what is moral and proper. It is by this severe moderation in everything that the Chinese Empire has sustained itself for thousands of years, and will endure hereafter.

"I find a highly remarkable contrast to this Chinese novel in the '*Chansons de Béranger*,' which have, almost every one, some immoral licentious subject for their foundation, and which would be extremely odious to me if uttered by a genius inferior to Béranger; he, however, has made them not only tolerable, but pleasing. Tell me your self, is it not remarkable that the subjects of the Chinese poet should be so thoroughly moral, and those of the first French poet of the present day be exactly the contrary?"

"Such a talent as Béranger's," said I, "would find no field in moral subjects."

"You are right," said Goethe; "the very perversions of his time have revealed and developed his better nature."

"But," said I, "is this Chinese romance one of their best?"

"By no means," said Goethe; "the Chinese have thousands of them, and had already when our forefathers were still living in the woods.

"I am more and more convinced," he continued, "that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere, and at all times, in hundreds and hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims on the surface a little longer than another: that is all. Herr von Matthiessen must not think he is the man, nor must I think that I am the man; but each must say to himself, that the gift of poetry is by no means so very rare, and that nobody need think very much of himself because he has written a good poem.

"But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too

